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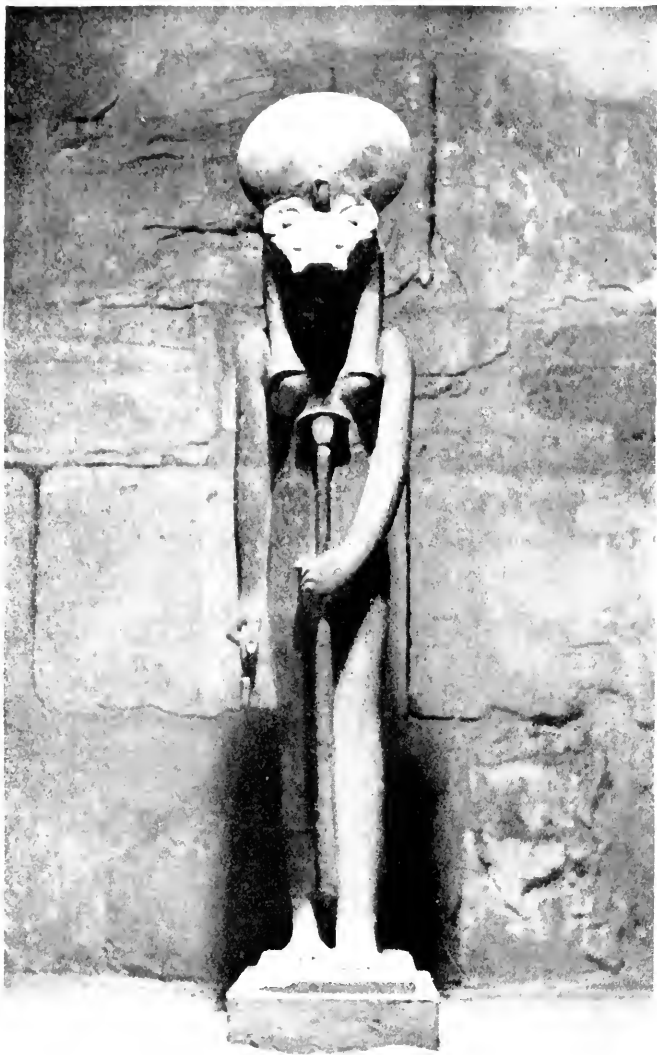




LEAVES FROM  
AN OFFICER'S NOTEBOOK



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SEKHMET: THE EGYPTIAN GODDESS OF WAR

# LEAVES FROM AN OFFICER'S NOTEBOOK

BY

ELIOT CRAWSHAY-WILLIAMS

AUTHOR OF

"ACROSS PERSIA," "SONGS ON SERVICE," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

1918

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To  
THE FUTURE

“ O IT is wickedness to clothe  
Yon hideous grinning thing that stalks  
Hidden in music, like a queen  
That in a garden of glory walks,  
Till good men love the thing they loathe.  
Art, thou hast many infamies,  
But not an infamy like this.  
O snap the fife and still the drum,  
And show the monster as she is.”

R. LE GALLIENNE :

*The Illusion of War.*



## FOREWORD

I PRESENT these pages, which are most of them literally leaves from a notebook, with much humility. I have little of the experience of war which it has been the fortune of many soldiers to obtain. Not mine to take part in that first incredible retreat of our unweathered but heroic regular army. Not mine to advance with them from the Marne to the Aisne, or to withstand the horrors of the assault on Ypres. My knowledge of life under fire has been gained in a brief period on the Western Front, and a participation in those engagements with the Turks in Sinai which formed one of the brightest and most interesting episodes of the war. It is therefore very humbly that I put before the public what I have written.

But, in some ways, perhaps even my inexperience in the more violent arts of modern war is an asset. For just as he who is new to a country is struck more vividly by what he observes than he who sees it every day, so one who comes fresh to a battlefield may note its daily details more acutely than one to whom they have become more or less ordinary affairs. Especially, I think, is that the case when one arrives, as I arrived in Flanders, not keyed up to an indefinite sojourn, but on a short visit. As I found, that tends to increase the strain on the nerves and to sharpen the senses of perception. To know that one must resign oneself to a long trial of endurance is at once a sedative and a

numbing influence. It is no use hoping for relief, and there will be always time to notice things. But, like the man who settles down in a foreign country, one finds that time and habit dull the power of appreciation. As John Buchan has said, after a little experience of the carnival of violence of modern war, the senses and imagination are deadened. If, then, I have never obtained the fortitude of the men of the front-line trenches, I trust that this may be balanced by a corresponding increase in ability to describe as strange and noteworthy those things which to them are everyday occurrences. That is my only excuse for writing of the battle front.

For the rest, my reflections and experiences have been those, I suppose, of many others whom war has taken from their familiar occupations and plunged into a new world. I have written them down in the faith that not novelty or sensationalism constitutes the warrant for a book, but sincerity alone.

I have been careful to eliminate anything that could even remotely be accused of disclosing secrets to the enemy; and I hope I have been successful in hurting the feelings of no one—least of all of that body of officers and men whom it has been my pleasure and privilege to command, and who have shown no less patience in the long period of waiting than they showed courage and ability when put to the test of battle.

ELIOT CRAWSHAY-WILLIAMS.

EGYPT, 1916.

## PREFACE

### AFTER TWO YEARS

Two years ! One can change a good deal in two years. Two years out of one's life is just about one chapter. Out of the best of one's life. For this war has put its finger in the works of our lives just when they were busiest.

But there is no need to grumble. The end of life is happiness by experience—the happiness which comes with knowledge. And we have all experienced much. So I, for one, would not grumble. The two years I have “lost ” I might have applied to making money, or to endeavouring to acquire other vanities, such as fame or pleasure. Instead I have been forced to acquire the only solid, valuable thing—experience.

True, I have a contra-account with Fate. Friends lost for ever, the society of loved ones forgone; music, art, all the civilizing influences, banished; life certainly brutalized. And, most of all, a burning, unappeasable anger at the senseless futility of it all—the barbaric system that still lets mankind descend to the beasts in his ordering of life.

It is no use talking of “a good cause.” That is beside the point in the feeling I have. We fight in a good cause. But no one should have to fight in any cause. While anarchy reigned in England, before the days of laws and policemen, it was possible to kill a

man in the street "in a good cause." One may still have a good cause; but one does not still have to kill men in the street. That is because we have organized our lives, because we have become more civilized. And when mankind has had sufficient sense to organize itself internationally as it has organized itself nationally, it will no longer be necessary to fight in a good cause. Till that day we human beings are but poor semi-barbaric creatures, and our diplomacy and Parliaments but the tawdry beads and trappings of the savage.

That is the truth. Let nothing eclipse or dull that truth. Let no argument about the rights and wrongs of warring nations blot out or blur the fact that nations should not war at all. Only by keeping that plain fact in view, and letting it ride over all minor controversies, shall we ever win through to our true goal.

The time will come when an enlightened world will look back on all wars as men look back on drunken orgies. Any particular orgy may have involved respectable citizens as well as the drunkards themselves; but in time all men will feel ashamed that the orgies were permitted.

And as for the "morning-after" headaches! Well, they will then probably still be afflicting, with the impartiality ascribed to the rain, "the just and unjust feller."

Perhaps it is no use grumbling. Humanity will go its own pace. But humanity is, after all, in the end an association of human beings, and can voluntarily quicken its pace, acting in concert. Wherefore it behoves us all, not to sit despairingly, but to arise and act. And, above all, not merely to grumble, which helps no one, and gets a cause the reputation of being the protégé of surly fellows.

So, if I have grumbled too much in these pages, I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Also I ask forgiveness. For—one should not grumble. Resist, indict, attack; but grumbling is mere words and a striving after wind.

The true spirit is Rupert Brooke's: "If this is Armageddon, I suppose one ought to be in it." Be in it, suffer it. And if you survive it, try to prevent another Armageddon.

No doubt we have all grumbled; it is but human. We have sat in sterile and uncivilized places, and have asked why England seemed to show no greatness in this war, failed to seize the opportunity of crushing certain evils and organizing the nation for ever, bungled here and botched there. We have laughed with contempt at those who have been afraid to tell us the truth. We have grouched because our days have seemed wasted and our lives brutalized. We have grieved because our friends have been killed and those we loved shattered and tortured. We have gazed with irritated derision on the spectacle of the political world apparently bunkuming away as much as ever, and on the picture (as shown in the illustrated weeklies) of the social world covering its usual vanities with a war-veneer. (Lord! why shouldn't they? What else should they do? It is bad enough for those who must to be sad and uncomfortable. For goodness' sake let someone keep the other end up.) We have longed that the Secretaries of State, diplomatists, editors, and other oracles, should come and spend a few days in trenches or deserts. We have envied those who are in their homes or in soft billets. But, for all our grumbling, we would not change our lot were we given the chance to. This is Armageddon, and we must be in it. We may be on its

outskirts, we may be at its core, that is as Fate wills; but somewhere in Armageddon we must be. We may die. Then there is no more to bother about. We may survive. Then—after the war——

Ah, after the war! One dare not think of it. But for some at least it will come. And then, let us hope, we may have learnt wisdom and humility. When humanity sounds the roll-call after the battle, let the names of the dead not be accounted in vain. Let nation join with nation in mourning the men who fought, all of them, in what they, at least, thought “a good cause.” Let pettiness and uncharitableness and mean-spiritedness be buried, and let man join with man in trying to repair the ravages man joined with man to make.

The true victory will be the victory of the higher elements of humanity. The true defeat will be the defeat of our better selves. We say we are fighting against certain hateful, cramping, and vicious principles. Let us see to it that in the moment of victory we are not conquered. For the real victory of Prussianism will be if its enemies are Prussianized.

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## MARCHING SONG IN FLANDERS\*

LAUGHTER and song lift us along,  
Over the mud and the marsh—step strong!—  
Through the twisted wrack of the crying Wrong  
    To the place where the black bees hum.  
Tramp through Gaul to the lilt of a Call;  
In many a Cause men have minded to fall,  
But we have a nobler Word than all,  
    The Word of a time to come.

    We fight the fight of Peace;  
    We fight that war may cease.

Trudge the plains where Misery reigns  
And life and love lie fettered in chains,  
Where the bleak sky blows and the black sky rains,  
    Singing beneath our breath.  
Nigh and more nigh; keep the heart high!  
Hush the voice and strain the eye,  
All for a Dream that shall live thereby  
    Come light, come dark, come death.

    We fight the fight of Peace;  
    We fight that war may cease.

Tunnel and trench; smoke and stench;  
Hail of Hell to make a man blench;  
Pains that pierce, and hands that clench;  
    Horrors that scream and hiss;  
Bear them strong! Right the wrong!  
Die in a ditch that men may live long!  
Charge to the next world singing a song!  
    A song!—a song of this:—

    We fight the fight of Peace;  
    We fight that war may cease.

YPRES, 1915.

\* Quoted by permission from "Songs on Service" (Blackwell, Oxford), by E. Crawshaw-Williams.

# LEAVES FROM A NOTEBOOK

## IN THE BEGINNING

### THE FIRST PAGES

"If this is Armageddon, I suppose one ought to be in it."—  
RUPERT BROOKE.

A PLACE IN ENGLAND,  
*Towards the beginning of the War.*

I AM going to keep a sort of diary for two reasons: to relieve my own feelings and to satisfy my own conscience. It will take the place of those, very possibly futile, letters to the papers and articles for the Reviews, with which one would attempt these objects in normal times. Just now it is neither possible, nor, very likely, politic to use these forms of expression. We will not discuss that. At all events, I am thrown back on that form of solitary indulgence which is here commenced. My excuse is that unless I indulged I should be unhappy. I am engaged in a perilous trade, and at any moment my life may be cut short. I have a son and a daughter who will, I hope, live long after me; besides many dear friends. Should I die, I do not want any of them to misunderstand me and imagine I was a man who, full of glowing and somewhat theatrical patriotism, went to his death in a happy assurance of his own virtue, his country's and mankind's righteousness, and the general fitness of things at large. If I die it will be the silly waste of a life, added to the

silly waste of thousands of other lives which have been sacrificed owing to the stupid mismanagement of human affairs by the modern world. A war is like a slum; there can be no real justification for its existence at all. War is not glorious or noble, or a tonic, or an opportunity for national "uplift," or anything else good or grand. It is a barbaric and useless folly due, of course, in part to a general human stupidity and ignorance, but chiefly to the incompetent statesmanship of mankind at large. If the members of all the Foreign Offices and Chancelleries were to be made to fight in the forefront of the first battle in every war, there would almost certainly be no war. But since the actual fighting is done by honest professional fighters, who are naturally keen on putting into practice their arts, aided by masses of recruits who are often humanly eager for a row and always told (with truth) that when there is a war they ought to fight, wars still occur. Moreover, the Press (which does not fight, but extracts money from the death and destruction of others) is always glad of a war; and this materially assists the blunders of the diplomatists. No doubt the Press ought to join the Foreign Office and the Chancelleries in the forefront of the first battle. No wars, if that could be.

Why, then, do I fight? True, I was a Territorial at the commencement of the war, and so could scarcely help myself. But that is not the correct answer. If I had been out of the Army I would have gone into it. Partly because, as I say, it is no good arguing after fighting has begun. No doubt we ought to think (in the right manner) of Peace; but we must fight while we do so. The Christian doctrine of non-resistance is fairly shown up by the crude necessities of war. As long as smiters smite it is futile and wrong to turn the other cheek to them. The real altruism is to replace smiting by peaceful forms of settle-

ment. And if people used fewer parrot cries and more common-sense, we should attain that end sooner. The man who is simply a religious idealist is as mischievous in his way as the man who is simply a militarist fanatic. Ideals we must have, and military fanaticism we must not have; but it merely makes men despair if they are dosed with Utopian dreams which they know to be impossible of realization, instead of with a mixture of optimism and practical sense which can inspire them to the accomplishment of reform.

Failing the real altruism, then, we must fight when there is fighting. When the crowd gets rowdy, the peaceable man must use his fists or quit. And there is no quitting in international politics. Some day there will be no rowdyism either—but not yet. Therefore we must still fight. And just as in the case of the crowd, it is not so much a question of what we fight for (if indeed we know). The reasons—the beginnings of the fight—can be supplied afterwards, and always differ in the views of the various combatants. The real point is that, if there is a fight on which concerns you—fight. If not, keep away—keep the peace. In the individual case this point is one of common-sense *plus* conscience. In the national case, owing to our system of diplomacy, the matter is more complicated. But there is, at all events, no doubt as to when you actually are fighting.

Another reason why in any case I should join in a war when it occurred, even though I think war a miserable and foolish thing, is that I have in me that desire to be “in” things which are happening which is innate in most of the human race. The right sort would always rather play than look on. And when adventure calls, the right sort hears and answers.

Not that I cannot understand the feelings of the man

who bitterly resents the blundering of the World-Gods which has led to the demand that he, a peaceable citizen, who perhaps may number friends among his country's enemies, should go out and shoot or get shot. He is entitled to complain.

On the whole I think both men right. That is to say, I think that in all wars those in authority, both friend and foe, are the responsible (I had almost said "guilty") parties, and that the masses of the people are imposed on, sacrificed, and betrayed—and yet not justified in holding back from the bloody welter of chaos their lords have created. Hence I fight, and should fight anyhow. But I lay no claim to the title of "patriot," "saviour of my country," or any other of those bombastic epithets with which those who stay at home and write for the Halfpenny Press delight to plaster men who, for various reasons, prefer to fight.

It has often interested me to reflect in what spirit I shall wage war when it comes to the point. I have absolutely no antipathy against "the Germans." I do not think it is possible to hate a people any more than it is possible to indict them. Individual Germans I may dislike, but so I do individual Englishmen. Certain traditionally German characteristics I also dislike, but not more than I do certain traditionally English characteristics. I do not like to see a fat lower middle-class German eating soup, but I also do not like to see a fat lower middle-class Englishman eating peas. I disagree with what is known as "Prussianism," but I also disagree with what is known as "insularity." I know that the English are more sporting and active and, perhaps, more good-humoured and free than the Germans; but I also know that the Germans are more educated and musical and painstaking and efficient than the English.

I can see a great deal of sense and truth in the English accusation against the Germans that they are too militant, officer-ridden, and gross; but I can also see a great deal of sense and truth in the German accusation against the English that they are too commercial, priest-ridden, and un-idealist. I have close friends in England—and in Germany. I suppose the real test is whether one would rather live in England or in Germany—and I should like to live in both. Altogether, it seems to me a great pity that two great and in many ways noble nations should be cutting each other's throats at the bidding of their rulers instead of trying how each could infect the other with something of its own peculiar genius, and improve the sum of human happiness. And here we are pretending that all Germans are criminals, and there are the not less misguided Germans composing hymns of hate and making asses of themselves most royally. It is pathetically comic. I suppose I am altogether too cosmopolitanly-minded for this age; but at least I do realize and acknowledge the fact—and fight!

But all this will make it very difficult for me to go into battle full of that fury which is supposed to inspire every patriotic soldier. Upon what must I rely, if not on this? Not in order to prevent or overcome that terror which presumably overtakes all normal men when first under fire, and to be exempt from which must be a gift such as to be exempt from sea-sickness or vertigo. But to keep me up to butchering properly. Well, for one thing, that is what I shall have gone there for; and having made up my mind to the business, I shall go through with it. Furthermore, I should think that in battle the general bloodthirstiness and violence is infectious and irresistible. But there is another reason why I shall butcher as efficiently as I am able. That is, pride in one's skill—such

as that skill may be. Being an artillery officer, I shall escape, presumably, that intoxication of the hurly-burly in front—a hurly-burly in which (until, at least, the bayoneting begins) all individual effort is swamped and lost, and which must supplant all pride in skill. But I shall either be behind a mound, a tree, or a limber, actually witnessing the shells burst or hit as I direct them; or I shall be at the end of a telephone wire hearing the Observation Officers' reports on each shell, and still feeling I am, as it were, playing on the instrument of my battery as a conductor feels he is playing on the instrument of his orchestra. And to fire a battery is a game beside which to hit a golf-ball or kick a football pales into insignificance—at least, so far as the joy of doing it skilfully is concerned.

But perhaps I shall do it badly. Or perhaps I shall never go out. Or perhaps—— But there, never mind; there is no harm in visualizing, whatever may happen.

## PERSONALIA

“ Our Noble Selves.”—*Old Toast.*

A PLACE IN ENGLAND,  
*Early in the War.*

Let me introduce you !

We are a Battery of the Royal Horse Artillery (Territorial Force). For several years of peace we have been soldiers for a fortnight in the year. Now we have become professionals at the game—and the game has become deadly earnest.

We have four somewhat out-of-date German-pattern guns, which are still capable of useful work (but we hope to get new English ones). Also we have a war strength,



including our ammunition column, of seven officers, a doctor, a vet., nearly 250 horses, and over 200 men. In addition, of course, sundry ammunition waggons, general service waggons, water-carts, and so on, and a motley collection of stores of all kinds. That's we!

Let us become more closely acquainted. I will present you to our officers.

Of course, they have not been professional soldiers, except in the case of the C.O., who spent four years in the Gunners ten years ago, and a subaltern who was once in a Lancer regiment. They are civilians soldiering.

In detail—the C.O.

Well, of course, he suffers somewhat from being a C.O. No C.O. can be wholly human. Even if he wants to be, the officers will not let him. One of the most pathetic things imaginable is to see a C.O. trying to get his officers to treat him with complete frivolity. Imagine a schoolmaster at nets. . . . "Won't you bowl, sir?" "Oh, that wasn't l.b.w." . . . You have the idea? Of course, it isn't as bad as that; but, apart from the perennial C.O.-ishness of his position, I don't think a C.O. is really expected to unbend completely. Perhaps one might say that he must never make a fool of himself. It would shock the others.

Poor fellow! He suffers from an exaggerated sense of his own importance—on the part of others. I believe our C.O. feels this, and would like sometimes to gambol like a babe or be smacked on the back by a subaltern. For he is young in heart in spite of various elderly habits—fads, one might almost say. For instance, he makes Lists. Everything must have a List. If the Battery is to move, a List must be prepared. If a Sports is to be held, a List is produced. If he goes on a week-end trip to the seaside, lo! a List—uniform, pyjamas, bathing

kit. I believe when the C.O. dies he will make a List of things to ask the Deity. And he will probably lose it on the way to heaven.

And he is only thirty-six. Sad !

Of course, being a C.O. he has to have a temper. And he has. But, if left to calm down, he will probably ask to be forgiven in the end. Not directly, of course, but by implication. However, he says that, if his disposition ever is permanently soured, it will be due to the Battery signallers.

I think he means well.

Next, please !

The Senior Captain ! Oh, so Senior ! Not in years (he is two years younger than the C.O.). But in manners and habits—well, settled hardly describes it. Petrified would be better. Of course, this is merely a malicious way of describing a methodical thoroughness. From tooth-washing to Battery Gun-Drill the Senior Captain's motto is "Steady." When an order is handed to him on a field-day by a breathless orderly, it is ten to one he will neatly cut open the envelope with a knife, sign the receipt with a fountain-pen, hand it back to the bearer, read the message, and then, selecting a suitable spot to sit down say: "Now let us have a good think." In this way battles are won.

The Senior Captain carries his methodical thoroughness into all departments of his life. His horses fall under his sway. No horses are cared for like his. When one fell sick, he almost sat up with it. In default of doing so, he ordered certain hot fomentations to be applied every few hours, which led to a saddle being burnt and the stable almost being set on fire. Then, alas ! with the horse getting worse, he had to go away on duty. And the horse got well.

As for domestic economy ! To see our Senior Captain wash his teeth (in camp one can hardly avoid it) is to realize that the meanest human duty can become a Sacred Trust.

Yes, he is Thorough.

The Junior Captain was, before the war, a land agent. Consequently we employ him to catch contractors. He has caught some already, and saved the Government a considerable amount of money, which, if we were a regular Battery without the benefit of land agents, they would infallibly have lost.

Nothing could seem more staid and respectable than our Junior Captain.

After him come the Subalterns. First—and he is to be Captain soon—comes the Adjutant. He is slightly older than the C.O., and in private life a country squire. For several years he served in a Lancer regiment, and has the Service touch. But he is new to the Guns, and sometimes, I think, would like to be back in a Troop. But he is conscientious to the uttermost, and no end of a worker, besides being a good chap.

And what more can you want ?

Next—and he will henceforth be the Senior Subaltern—comes a problem. He admits it himself. “ You know,” he says, “ I’m such a damned fool I oughtn’t to be in the Gunners at all. A cavalry regiment or a camel corps is the sort of place for me. Much better let me go.” But we don’t. Because, first of all, he isn’t such a damned fool. True, problems with the plotter and difficulties of double displacement tend to reduce him to the state attained by a previous officer of the Battery who, on being asked some conundrum of the kind by the G.O.C., carefully fixed his eyeglass

in his eye, looked up, and brightly observed: "Ah, there you have me, General!"

That is precisely what the Senior Section Commander would say. But, then, he suffers, so he says, from adenoids (they frequently make him lose money at Bridge), and once they are out he calculates on thinking twice as quickly and at least half again as accurately. Meantime we keep him, and he endeavours to master his gunnery, and incidentally becomes tremendously popular with the men. The only thing we cannot forgive him is that he got the Battery a black mark at practice camp because he made a detachment fire their gun before it was laid. "These Generals," he said, "do like to hear the guns go off. Never mind if it's straight. Poof it off."

Which they did. But the Generals were not pleased.

Occupation before the war—never ascertained.

The other Subaltern—the Right Section Commander—is a solicitor. He solicits in an Eastern County, but appears to have abandoned the practice cheerfully for the more alluring rôle of a Yeomanry trooper. Thence he came to us. Since he has had his hair cut in the military fashion, it is impossible to tell which is the bald patch which occupied about half the superficial area of his scalp. A neat ruse. But the general effect is too like an ostrich egg.

I fancy he will make a good officer, as his head is lined better inside than out.

Other officers will flit in and out of the Battery I have no doubt; we cannot hope to be free from changes and casualties. But at the moment it only remains for me to describe the two attached specialists.

Our Medical Officer, if he ever writes a history of the war, will refer to only one topic—Bridge. Not a

Pontoon Bridge or a Swing Bridge, or any other military bridge, but just common or smoking-room Bridge. His chapter headings will be: "Bridge at Ypres," "Bridge in Egypt," "Bridge as played by German Prisoners," "Gunners' Bridge," "Is our Staff efficient at Bridge?" "Generals I have met at the Bridge-table," with, no doubt, a final chapter on "How the War will affect Bridge."

Beyond this, all that need be said of our M.O. is that we have repeatedly asked him, not only for his patients', but for our own sake, to wear a silencer on his voice; and that the Veterinary Officer, after he had occupied the same room with him for a month, developed a most distressing habit of automatically waking at intervals during the night, ejaculating: "Damn you, shut up!" and throwing a boot into the darkness. Continued on leave, this practice nearly got him into trouble.

The V.O. himself is the cheeriest member of the mess. And for this alone after the war he should have a medal. For at all times and in all places, and more especially on service in war-time, may the Lord bless the men who make us laugh.

Red-faced, cherubic, grey-haired V.O., you have much to the credit side in that balance-sheet which we all run up during our stay on earth!

That's the officers. A mixed lot: we are!

The men are not so mixed. They nearly all come from one large Midland town. Mostly artisans, clerks, and factory hands, with a sprinkling of the more robust trades. On the whole they may be taken to have been a difficult material for military purposes. But they had two immense advantages—wits and will. With these all things are possible. And the physique comes. Certainly they have done well up to the present, and

I have no fear that they will not do well up to the end.

It is interesting to compare our Territorial officers and men with their brothers of the Regular forces. It is some years now since I was myself in the Regulars; but the glimpses I have had, on courses and so on, of their men and methods make me think that, though great strides have been made in knowledge and experience, and a considerable change of tone in the direction of sobriety of deportment and a quiet earnestness has occurred, yet in many general characteristics the Army remains practically the same as it was in my day. There are profound reasons, indeed, why this should be so, and why a professional army will always possess virtues and defects foreign to a part-time soldiery.

On the whole, given a due time for training, I think I would prefer the Territorial stamp of officer and man. Of course, the reservation regarding "a due time for training" is one of paramount importance. But on that point I will not argue now, and will merely restate my case in a form which will make such argument unnecessary by saying that personally I would prefer to have officers and men whose soldiering was relieved by some other occupation, than those whose soldiering was their sole aim in life. Of course, all ranks must be properly skilled (and here inevitably crops up the training question again); but I think that a wider experience of life than the soldier's tends to develop intelligence and initiative, and that it can do so without imperilling skill or discipline. Undoubtedly, we in the Territorials get better human material than the Regulars do—or did. Normally, the professional soldier is undoubtedly more highly trained, more physically capable, and more technically informed, than the part-time

soldier. His continual training makes that inevitable; and this fact is sufficient in itself to demonstrate that for such a "ready-for-service" army as may be necessary to fight at a moment's notice we must always have practically whole-time men. But, after sufficient training (*i.e.*, for our second-line troops, who can be given time to "train on" after war has broken out), not only are part-time men as good as whole-time men, in my opinion they are better. For the machine soldier, though he is the only kind that can be ready at any moment, is not necessarily the highest-quality soldier. In the first place, he is not the highest quality material. Superimpose on such material, admirable as it may be, a training which, also admirable as it may be, undoubtedly and of necessity cramps initiative, and to a certain extent discourages individual intelligence; follow this up by a system of promotion which, at all events in the case of officers, has the effect of allowing a man to get on only by the superannuation of others; and the resultant product cannot be expected to be without some shortcomings. These shortcomings of the Regular Army, like its superiorities, are not so apparent in the part-time organization. There is, no doubt, less rigid discipline among Territorials in normal times; but there is more initiative, more enthusiasm, and more potentiality. There is less actual knowledge of technical details, but more ability to grasp them when presented. Consequently, given adequate instructors to instil a proper amount of discipline and the requisite amount of technical knowledge, the Territorial soldier should actually surpass the Regular in no very long space of time. Certainly, while under no illusions as to the comparative capabilities of my Battery and a Regular Battery at the beginning of the war, I have a higher

opinion in some ways of my present officers and men than of those of the Batteries I was in when a Regular. For instance, I never remember in the old days men asking to be instructed "after hours" in points of gunnery which they desired to understand. And no Regular officer I met could outdo in zeal and enthusiasm the part-time officers of my Battery. These things were in the days of peace; after war broke out the spirit naturally strengthened and increased. Now, I fancy, all ranks would face the ordeal of battle, and "temper" under it, as well as most Regular Batteries. Undoubtedly they would do so better than, for instance, the rather recruit-fed Battery I was in at home at the time of the Boer War.

The chief defect of the men is what I may call want of gumption. That is a defect common to recruits and part-time soldiers who have had little weathering. The recruit soon gets over his lack of gumption, for there are many comrades who can give him a helping hand and any necessary tips. It is more difficult for those in the position of my men, who have among them few who have had such experience as can enable them to teach others. That is why in every part-time unit I would have quite a reasonable nucleus of professionals—an ideal combination, to my mind, of the two elements.

At all events, it has been difficult up to now to get the men to behave as a capable community as regards the details of life. There has been much lamentable waste and loss—of food, of bed-boards, of equipment, of harness, and so on. Only by unpleasant experience—stoppage of pay and the like—can the lessons of care and economy be driven home; and the sooner it is driven home, the better. But it needs a good deal of organization to be able to do even this. All equipment



—blankets, haversacks, mess tins, straps, every small item—must be stamped with a number before losses (or even thefts) can be brought home to the right individual. It is in these cut-and-dried details that the Territorial is far behind the Regular; though even here he need not be, with proper organization.

The officers have more gumption and much zeal. Where the individual has plenty of money, the zeal finds one of its outlets in the purchase of every imaginable form of campaign equipment. One officer (I will not even disclose his rank) became quite notorious in this way. Day after day the Battery office was piled with his parcels. Canvas boots, prismatic compasses, cap-covers, waterproofs, special socks, waders, waterproof breeches, trenchoscopes, mackintosh sheets, woolly waistcoats, leather jackets, fluffy underclothes, tremendous gloves, under-gloves, revolvers, ammunition—the place swarmed with his equipment, most of it destined to defy the rigours of trench life at Christmas. Eventually two of the other officers sent a card intimating to their opulent comrade that, having entered the furniture-removing trade, they were in a position to supply him with a pantechnicon for the period of the war at a very reasonable cost, and soliciting his patronage.

When we go out, I have no doubt at all it will either be to a tropical climate or in the height of summer (which, let me confess, will make me also look a trifle foolish).

I find that in this chapter on persons I have made no mention of a very important person indeed—Tyn-ton. (He is licking my hand as I write, to thank me for correcting the oversight.)

Tyn-ton is a war-baby.

I helped him into the world, and since then he has

helped me. Also he has helped interest, amuse, and generally edify, the Battery. All know "Ping-pong," as he is familiarly termed. (His name is really Welsh, but it sounds Pekinese.) And all love him.

Above all things Tyn-ton is a sportsman. He has a body remotely from Pekin, but a soul straight from those gods who give the qualities most sought after and respected. On shore, at sea, in fair fields or deserts, Tyn-ton never despairs or disgruntles. In a word, Tyn-ton gets there. His little black face, funny paws, and general air of devilment, have greeted me in queer places. I hope they will greet me—some day—at Home.

### A SOLDIER'S LIFE

"Live dangerously."—NIETZSCHE.

ANOTHER PLACE IN ENGLAND,

*A later date.*

We have not been mobilized so very long; but it is amazing to note the change in the appearance of our men. For the first time in the lives of many of them, the revivifying influence of the open air and an abundance of exercise is cleansing their blood, expanding their muscles, and generally giving a chance to those physical potentialities which were before stifled by an existence in a city. I do not know which is the more irritating—the nonsense that is talked about the marvels of modern civilization, or the nonsense that is talked about the necessity of universal military service, not as a means of supplying a sure means of defence, but as a means to counteract the stunting effects of modern civilization. As for civilization, we move faster, we

live faster, we have many scientific means of adding to our capacities and to our enjoyment; and if with all these things we had the common-sense and public spirit to employ them properly, we should no doubt be very blessed. But we are too stupid and too little-minded not to spoil our advantages by a gross clumsiness and a selfish greed. The endowments which should be the common heritage are appropriated to a comparatively small section of the race, and that section is frequently too pampered and corrupted to make full use of its riches. The consequence is an ill-balanced and distorted civilization with, on the one hand, underfed and overworked masses herded together into factories and slums in conditions infinitely worse in many ways than those of free-living, healthy beasts, and, on the other, an overfed and underworked minority, too fat and luxurious to appreciate its comforts, or to extract from life those joys which are to be obtained only by healthy hardship and vigorous exertion. There are, no doubt, intermediate classes and individual exceptions, but the generalization is as true of British society to-day as any generalization ever can be of anything. Civilization to-day is excellence thwarted, stunted, and misapplied. But that is not civilization's fault.

Then as to military service, considered not as a provider of necessary national resources, but as a remedy which shall bring back to the masses those benefits of an open life, exercise, and consequent physical strength and stamina, of which the rapacity of modern industrialism has robbed them. Well, the answer to this question seems to me to be supplied by our men at the present moment. Their condition replies very vividly that the prescribing of military service—*i.e.*, the training to kill—as the right remedy for the evil physical

effects of our so-called civilization, involves an instance of that "fallacy of confusion" of which I remember the technical logical name is *ignoratio elenchi*. What we have to show is, not that military service would make men healthy, but that it is the right, the best, the true way to make men healthy. That, in fact, there is something in a training, which has as its end the killing of men, which cannot be obtained by any other kind of training. Of course many further confuse the matter by bringing in the question of our necessary defences; but this consideration of two distinct problems under one head is merely another, and a very serious, fallacy. Let us decide—if we are wise, quite separately, for they involve entirely different factors—first how to make our people healthy, and secondly how to defend our country. No doubt the two issues may touch at some points, but to confuse them, to make one necessarily dependent or wrapped up in the other, is not only to be illogical, but unstatesmanlike.

It seems to me, then, judging by the present physical condition of our men, that the art of killing need have little to do with the improvement of the national physique, and that the benefits conferred in this direction by military service would be merely incidental, and not essential. For these men of the Battery have never been to the front, have never fired a shot in warfare, have never killed anyone. True, they have exercised themselves with guns, lived in military tents, and disciplined themselves in warlike movements. But the effect would have been the same if they had exercised themselves in any other outdoor way—say in felling trees and agriculture; if they had lived in civilian tents; and if their discipline had been of any other kind. The object of military service—war, killing—was not neces-

sary, obviously has not been necessary. But military service without war as an object would be unthinkable (as also, some may be tempted to remark, would war without military service).

How, it will be said, get all these desirable things—outdoor life, camaraderie, discipline, physical training—without the ultimate inspiration of war? This is just the question which has for some time been exercising the more advanced minds. It would be impossible, it may be thought, to get grown men to conduct themselves on the semi-pretence that contents the Boy Scout (though he, it is true, is taught to have not only the sham but the real battle before him as a final goal). Nor would, it may be further objected, any development of the camping and roughing-it spirit which has arisen so strongly of late, coupled with the instinct for outdoor sports, supply the necessary incentive. This assertion is more doubtful, and it is quite conceivable that a future and more enlightened generation may find it possible to found the health of its nation, and its development of certain aspects of character, on sound physical training in the schools, plus sports, plus the camping spirit. This is indeed most probable, and it need not be feared that manliness or the other virtues attributed to a soldier need decay under such a régime. It needs plenty of discipline, self-sacrifice, and stamina and exertion, to camp properly; and courage, the spirit of adventure, and romance, will never vanish while this world persists. Even if there are no more weapons of war, there will still be steam-engines, flying machines, rocky crags, unexplored fastnesses, brave sports; and men will go down to the sea in ships. The lust of killing is not necessary to bravery; there are many excellent pheasant shots who would be poor companions

in a tight place. Nor is the battle-field the only theatre of daring, or the best.

To put it shortly, if in the last resource the high test of manliness is to be able to face killing and being killed, Nietzsche was right, and humanity at large is wrong. Let us be Prussians. But that is not so; the nations and individuals who base their creed on this fallacy will go, as the cave men went, as the Inquisitors went, as the robbers and highwaymen went; and others, saner and nobler, will take their places. The path of progress may be tortuous and tedious, but it goes forward, not back.

There are very few people who will defend war as such; and certainly I have found that no one will who has been in battle. But there is an appreciable number of sincere and otherwise humane persons who profess to find in war experience some strange perfecting influence not to be attained elsewhere. This is, I take it, what the Germans would call a form of Kultur. There is, these people say, Kultur in war. I am not yet qualified to speak from experience; but I should not say there was any more of this kind of Kultur in war than in any other crisis when the chances of life and death have to be faced. And whether it is necessary, or even entirely good, to have been through such a crisis, I do not know. Personally I have had the experience of being well and in full possession of my senses, and at the same time of being practically certain that I should be dead within an hour. I do not think that the experience had any particular moral or spiritual effect on me. It was a powerful and ever-remembered sensation; but I doubt if it were a sensation in an entirely different class to any other. The sum of several other sensations would probably equal it.

It is, however, necessary, I think, to follow Nietzsche's advice and "live dangerously." Also it is necessary to fight against over-comfort or too permanent comfort. But the keeping of these two rules need not involve the killing of other human beings. There are opportunities of living dangerously, and thus tuning up the moral and spiritual fibres, all around us continually; and the acceptance of these opportunities will not only almost inevitably conduce to a successful life, but will result in a salutary psychological discipline. To resist the temptations of comfort or luxury is more difficult, as it is, perhaps, even more important. Unluckily, a large part of the human race looks upon comfort and luxury, not as incidentals, but as essentials, or aims, in human existence. That is because many find it so difficult to realize, as Bernard Shaw once put it, that you cannot taste wine by always keeping it in your mouth. Personally I have almost a greater horror of too much comfort than of too much hardship. I tried to put my attitude into rhyme the other day:

## TO COMFORT.\*

Wanton, with soft and close-enveloping arms,  
Octopus-like, sapping the strength of men;  
O thou, like Love, the goal of life, and then  
The leprous mother of a brood of harms,  
Come touch me lightly on my fevered lips  
With thine that breathe of poppies and of sleep;  
And with the balm of thy white finger-tips  
Win my red eyelids from the watch they keep.  
Then, get thee gone, before thy vampire mouth  
Have time to fasten on my longing throat,  
And thy low voice, that whispers of the South,  
Seduce my ear from a more valorous note.  
Sweet snare of manhood, rival of red Life;  
Mistress thou mayst be, thou shalt ne'er be wife.

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\* Quoted by permission from "Songs on Service" (Blackwell, Oxford), by E. Crawshaw-Williams.

Certainly, a soldier's life both provides opportunity for living dangerously (even in peace-time) and for a due amount of beneficent hardship. Also it has other notable advantages, chief, perhaps, amongst them being that it usually supplies that great civilizing and humanizing influence, travel. Its prominent disadvantage is that, with its exacting duties, its rigorous routine, its almost exclusive cultivation of the more physical side of life, and its consequent proneness to the more animal forms of relaxation, it fails to give sufficient prominence to, even if it does not actually discourage, the mental and psychical elements of existence. It is, indeed, almost a continuation and enlargement of a schoolboy life; and soldiers therefore are apt to possess both the virtues and defects of schoolboys, but in a state of further development. They have all the animal joy in existence, the heartiness, and the simplicity, which characterize the healthy schoolboy; and they have also his semi-contempt for what he considers over-mentality, and for a devotion to the softer or more serious aspects of human affairs. No doubt the modern officer is more educated and less elementary than his predecessor; but so long as military life exists at all, it will possess fundamental characteristics which must infallibly develop the schoolboy vein. But if only a soldier's life could be brought to perfection, it could be an ideal medium for the development of the right sort of man: a man sanely balanced between the physical, the mental, and the spiritual; healthy, clean, disciplined in character; and at the same time tolerant, high-minded, kind, and keenly alive to all art, music, literature, science, and so on. Perhaps, however, this perfection of a soldier's life could no longer be the life of a soldier.

In any case, to be a soldier is to get a great joy out



of things in general. My most happy recollections, I think, date back to the time when I was wholly and exclusively a soldier. True, since then I have developed interests and aptitudes which it would probably have been impossible to develop had I devoted myself entirely to soldiering. But whether it was merely youth, or whether it was really the influence of the life I led, those soldier days had a simple zest, and an entrancing adventurousness which it is to-day difficult to recapture. It is because the nearest moments to repossession have come when, again, I have been in camps and on marches that I am tempted to think that it is not only the freshness and vitality of youth which crowned those early days with a halo. For some things have a perennial charm. To ride a horse on a sunny spring morning through leafy lanes, with, behind you, the jingle and glitter of trotting horses and the rumble of travelling guns. To march through the incomparable and breathless first hours of the Eastern morning down the white ribbon of an Indian road, that stretches solitary and staring for miles across plain and jungle. To lead a Battery into action, cantering ahead, turning round to watch the column of guns rattling over the dry ground, and giving at the precise moment the signal which shall wheel them into line and on to their position. To feel your men know you and love you. To stand on the brow of a parched hillock in the Indian *meidan*, and watch the shells of your hidden guns burst fairly and clearly at their ten minutes' elevation over the distant target. To wander, in the afternoon, out across that same *meidan*, and find, on another hillock, the ancient temple of an unknown god. To go with some soldier friend for a week into the heart of the jungle, into a new and strange land full of untamed beasts and the

relics of a people of long ago. To come home, tired and happy, through an Indian night, under the silver radiance of a serene and splendid moon, with soft scented airs fanning your face, after a long day's snipe and duck shooting over a reedy *ghil*. To eat hugely, drink deeply, love masterfully, and to feel charged with the fulness of the joy of living and the beauty of all things. . . .

Yes, a soldier's life need not be all barrack-square and garden-party.

### FROM AN EAST COAST EYRIE

“The onlooker sees most of the game.”—*Proverb*.

ON THE SOUTH-EAST COAST,  
*Early in 1915.*

When, last year, I built my little house on perhaps the finest view-point along the East Coast (it is really the East Coast, although that part of it which is south of the Thames), I little thought it was going to prove an admirable grand-stand from which, during recovery from an illness, to watch some phases of the war. Indeed, I well remember, when the house was half built, lying with some friends, on a sunny day, among the rising foundations, and watching eight stately super-Dreadnoughts steaming past. “Curious to think,” someone said, “that in all probability those twenty million pounds’ worth of iron and steel will never be used—will pass peaceably to the scrap-heap.” We comforted ourselves for the waste of good money by reflecting that at least it provided us with a very impressive spectacle.

That outlay provides us with still more impressive

spectacles nowadays. Of course, there is always some war vessel passing or cruising about. Always, at the beginning of the war, there was one little gunboat faithfully watching the shipping. Alas! one day there was a fountain of iron and water, and she was gone. Other grim reminders of the times have not been lacking, and still remain: a torpedoed steamer, her stern awash and aground; and a derelict mine, like some uncouth sea monster driven ashore.

Now, a smaller and grimmer craft than the ill-fated gunboat has taken up the patrol job, and untiringly marches up and down. Day and night we hear the petulant "woof, woof, woof!" of his syren (I can't call him "her"), to assure us that we are never left unguarded. Sometimes he speaks with other voices and for other ends. One Sunday, a week or two ago, he suddenly appeared to be possessed by the devil. Without a warning of any kind (audible to us), he began to dash madly this way and that, circling, slanting, returning, foaming before and behind, belching black clouds of smoke; one almost expected to see him leap altogether from the water, so restive he seemed beneath the mysterious power which filled him. And within five minutes stranger things happened. Far out at sea, where he fathers a fleet of grubby, indefatigable mine-sweepers, a larger edition of our guardian angel suddenly became afflicted with the same demon of unrest. Only in this case the demon goaded him, not in circles and dashes, but in one long, hawk-like swoop straight to his comrade. Black smoke, white foam, and amid them the tiny scorpion of the sea. And there, from farther away, at first a tiny dot on the horizon, see! another. After a minute or so great columns of blackness rise into the air from behind the down to the

south. One after another ten destroyers leap and race towards the centre of attraction, defiling the unclouded sky and churning the untroubled sea. A splendid sight, in spite of its utter devilishness. Speed, power, the potency of destruction, all instinct with reason and responding to an unheard, unseen call, rush through space. Neck and neck, or, rather, stem and stem, they tear along, right under our cliff, to their bewitched brother. It is like a rivalry of leviathans. But the finish is tame. Circling round, they speak a moment with their summoner, the last ones do not even reach him, but wait expectant and aloof; then, after dallying a little, they turn disappointedly around and steam home.

That is all that is presented to our uninformed senses, which have not been favoured with the wireless clue to the situation. Afterwards we learn that a German submarine has had the audacity to come to the surface on that sunny afternoon, within a few yards of a vessel lying off our shore—and has escaped paying the penalty for her daring. But it was a nice outing for our sailors, and a nice sight for us.

It is not only on the sea that entertainment is provided; it is to be found also in the air. The other day I looked up from my work to say to Moira: "Aeroplane about!" One could just hear the unmistakable, vicious whirr; but when we went out on the veranda and looked up we could see nothing, and went incuriously back again; for one of our aeroplanes is often over us reconnoitring. A little later we are more fortunate, and through the glass roof of the conservatory see two of our planes go over seawards, to return some time later. The only other occurrences that morning were a couple of reports from somewhere, about the time we heard the first plane, and the development of a kind of prairie

fire on the down behind our house. Afterwards (from London) there comes the message which weaves all these happenings into a connected "incident." A German aeroplane has "raided" us, dropped two bombs in the sea just off the house, and been fired at by our anti-aircraft guns, a shell from which has set the grass on fire on the slopes in rear of us. It is delightful to be in the midst of so much that is thrilling; but it is a drawback that we cannot realize its true import until the London papers arrive.

Indeed, we are not moved by anything more than interest or curiosity respecting the happenings on land and sea and air. I am sure it enters no one's head to be afraid. A night or so ago there came heavy firing from the sea about ten o'clock. We hung out of the window. Out on the smooth water a boat was burning a blue flare. In a little she sent up rockets. Then came more crashing and rumbling of guns. "Zeppelin raid, I expect," I ventured. "I do hope we don't miss it because we're asleep." For a friend of mine had written to say she had been utterly unaware of the bomb-dropping, and only heard of it next morning. Later on we are awakened by more reports—sharper, and seemingly nearer. But it is no use craning and straining our sight, and we go regretfully to bed, to sleep soundly till morning, when the milk-boy has no information to give.

Yes, it is an exciting neighbourhood, and I believe that I could let the house for quite a high figure as an "exceptional position for viewing the war." True, it is only the extreme outskirts and fringe of the war; but on calm days there is to be heard the distant, but curiously reverberant and ominous, sound of sullen firing from over towards Flanders.

## REFLECTIONS IN RETIREMENT

“ Prospice !”

ON THE SOUTH-EAST COAST,  
*Early in 1915.*

Certainly, being ill provides time for reflection which does not occur in the normal life of a soldier. On an ordinary working day there is scarcely opportunity at its close to jot down the skeleton events in a diary. Moreover, there is a lack of inclination for solid thinking or action outside the programme of necessary work. This is scarcely to be wondered at. Early rising; several hours' riding; office details; a petty court on offenders; afternoon gun-drill or a lecture; more office—a day like that leaves one tired and mentally disjointed. The only thing, for a man and not a miracle, is to have a quiet cup of tea, a smoke, and, perhaps, a little light reading in the winter or light exercise in the summer. It is absolutely true, I can testify, that one cannot do one's best mentally and physically on one and the same day. So, normally, brain work and writing, outside the scope of his profession, have rather to go to the wall so far as concerns a soldier in times of active employment.

But it is different for a sick soldier. The reaction from the race of strenuous life seems to call for violent exercise in other directions. So, except just at first when illness numbed all faculties, my brain has lately seemed impelled to more than usual effort. The daily course of the war, the bulletins, the constant raising of new and vivid questions, has no doubt helped towards this stimulation. Anyhow, I have thought to boiling-pitch; thought to exasperation; thought even unto

literary expression. The exasperation, no doubt, has been partly due to enforced idleness. When one cannot do, one criticizes. But I must say there arises, for one reason or another, a feeling of irritation at the general way things are going. It is not just a sense of disappointment at the falsification of unduly optimistic prophecies as to the war itself. I have always been prepared for that (and got slanged as a pessimist in consequence). It is a sense of almost disgust at the way the authorities and the people take things. From the authorities we get a timid reluctance to face truths, a pap-feeding of the Press, a general course of conduct admirably calculated to inspire distrust and resentment, and at the same time deter from manliness and energy. From the people we get (partly because of the blundering of the authorities) a mixture of stupidity, braggadocio, and selfish want of vision, which almost makes one despair. Silly and ignominious "recruiting" posters plaster the hoardings, colourless and manifestly undependable and incomplete official reports share place in the papers with equally undependable "special" articles, fatuous "war" photographs, and hysterical outbursts about "war-babies," spies, the worthlessness of anything German, "uplift," campaigns against all kinds of real and fancied evils, the incompetency of some particular Minister (it is never the same Minister two weeks in succession), and the Censor (this is always the same). The war is like some great and gross General Election. Nothing much is done. When it comes to a really important question, such as drunkenness, a word from a vested interest is enough to dissipate the moral courage of a whole Ministry. Truth to tell, there has been shown very little national greatness either among rulers or people during this war. Although we have

been mercifully spared the wretched and shameful public indecencies that accompanied the Boer War (there has been little excuse at present), there has been all the old spirit of brag mingled with muddle that inspired those miserable years. Maybe the thing has not hit home yet; and war, which always produces evil passions, may not, if too lightly felt, even produce in their company those qualities of courage, restraint, endurance, and a grim sense of the realities which it can teach. But certainly we have none of that national inspiration which might be evinced, which made Russia set the seal on vodka-selling, and France on absinthe—which, it is no use denying, is to be found in Germany.

And, while the war goes on, hardly anyone seems to think it worth while to think out how to prevent such another catastrophe. Yet it is vitally necessary to do so—*now*.

In one sense it is true, as the Prime Minister said in his speech at the Guildhall Banquet, and as he reiterated in the House of Commons on March 1, that this is “no time to talk of peace.” In another sense, it is undoubtedly the only time to talk of peace. It may be no use discussing the territorial, financial, and other details of peace until the end of the war is more clearly in sight—though even here it is, at all events, conceivable that a clear and candid announcement as to points resolutely resolved upon could do no harm and might do much good. But there is one point, which must be involved in the eventual peace, discussion of which at the earliest possible moment is not only pardonable, but necessary. This is the question of how to insure that the peace entered into shall be permanent—a question fraught with difficulty and demanding searching and prolonged deliberation. It will be too late to discuss



this point when peace is in sight; matters will then rapidly mature under the hands of professional diplomatists, and the nation at large will have no time to make its desires felt. Therein lies a great danger. For unless the democracies make their will felt, there is little chance of a guarantee against future war. Therefore the demands of the democracies must be impressed on the diplomatists and Governments so vigorously, and in such good season, that there shall be no chance of these demands being misunderstood or disregarded. Thus may the diplomatic mind be brought to take bold and, if need be, revolutionary steps to attain the needs of humanity. In the future, foreign policy must no longer remain a secret and dangerous monopoly; it must be democratized. And the first, chief, and vital step towards this is that the democracies should insist on being the moulding force in the treaty of peace which will end this war. To this end, not only must future possibilities now be discussed; but the democracies must so instruct and organize themselves that no diplomatic power can afford to set aside their will. There is no necessity to let such a consideration of the future peace interfere with a determination to win the war. To state candidly and in unmistakable language that no unjust end is contemplated, and that a great object is fought for, should not prejudice victory, but contribute to it. War is very much like an election campaign; other things being more or less equal, that side will be most likely to win which knows clearly what it is fighting for, and has a firm faith in the rectitude of its aim.

It would, therefore, probably do much to inspire its fighters as well as to make a permanent peace more practicable were the Government or people of any of the great belligerent Powers to-day to take courage to

tell the world: " We did not and do not want this war; it has been forced upon us. Now that it has come, we must fight it out until certain objects are attained. But when this war is over we desire some assurance against another. To this end, when the terms of peace come to be discussed we are ready . . . "

Ah ! there is the point. We are ready to do what ? In the completion of that sentence lies the chief reason why it is to-day time to talk of peace. For whatever is to be done, the time to do it is at the end of this war. Then, whatever differences of opinion may be found as to the other terms of peace, on one point the vast majority of any nation will be found unanimous. There will be one great common factor of agreement—that humanity should not be hereafter treated to another such visitation. Perhaps the scheming pride of the Powers that be may not everywhere be entirely chastened; but everywhere the people themselves will be sick of war, and that is why it is so important that the people, and not the Powers, should mould the peace. It will be the chance of many lifetimes for bold and courageous measures; the iron will be hot almost unto melting. But the iron will not be struck unless the democracies urge and direct the blow.

The chief need, then, is immediate, sober, and frank canvassing of what may be done after Armageddon. Of the detailed territorial, financial, and other issues at stake until, at all events, later in the day, no very profitable discussion can probably be indulged in. But of this question of a permanent peace, which is an instant and lasting question, which cannot change except to become more insistent, there can be no doubt it is well to treat, here, everywhere, now, and at all times. It is only by so doing that the great difficulties

confronting those who aim at translating aspirations into practical measures can be realized and overcome. It is only by so doing that, when the time for action arrives, those in authority can be prevented from dismissing such aspirations as idle and fantastic dreams.

What, then, can be done to secure that peace, when it comes, shall be permanent? It is above all necessary in this matter to be practical. It is abundantly easy to write flowing sentences on the moral and material advantages of peace; it is much more difficult to frame any scheme calculated to prevent men (or their rulers) being fools enough to cast those advantages away.

Now, the only way to prevent war is obviously by *Compulsory Arbitration*. In national life the force of law has superseded the force of arms; why not in international life? Individuals are no longer allowed to decide their quarrels and claims by combat; why should peoples be allowed to do so? There is nothing to be said against the sense or morality of these principles; but this does not diminish the difficulty of translating them into practice. Everyone knows what substantial advance had been made in the direction of Universal Arbitration up to the outbreak of the present war. Mankind seemed nearing the Utopia of a world governed by reason instead of by force. It did not seem too much to look forward to a day, not far distant, when every State should have an arbitration treaty with every other State. America and England, "being resolved that no future differences" should be "a cause of hostilities between them," entered into an agreement, in 1911, to submit every possible difference to at least the delay of examination.\* Mr. Bryan planned a hail

\* This was followed by a treaty signed as lately as September 15, 1914, and ratified on November 10, 1914, establishing a permanent

of similar treaties on other lands. A long record of adjudications by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague proved the efficacy of that tribunal and the steady growth of a sense of international law-abidingness. More important, perhaps, than all in its significance was the fact that the Hon. William Dudley Foulke was able to tell a Washington audience, at the end of 1913, that "no question once submitted to arbitration has yet led to war," thus proving as pointedly as the peaceful settlement of the Dogger Bank incident that, could only time for reflection be insured, war would almost invariably be avoided. International *Sittlichkeit* seemed a demonstrated reality. Public opinion as a sanction for international laws and agreements appeared to need no reinforcement. Then, in the summer of 1914, came Armageddon.

What is the moral?

The chief moral, so far as it can be deduced, seems to be that it is not possible—not yet possible, at all events—to rely on the efficacy of international laws and agreements without some stronger "sanction" than *Sittlichkeit*, public opinion, or an international sense of morality. Although arbitration treaties might often remain intact, it was made evident that "Compulsory Arbitration" was a mere term, an expression without significance; no arbitration could be compulsory. Treaties might be kept—until the incentive to tear them up became too strong. Then they might go. Force was in the end the supreme law.

All this was a disappointment, but not a disillusion. Men had for long, while hoping for the best, faced the

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International Commission to deal with every kind of dispute for which settlement has not been provided and achieved under existing agreements.

worst. The "sanction"—*i.e.*, "that which enforces the command of the law"—of international law had been examined and debated. Various "sanctions" had been suggested; the efficacy of existing "sanctions"—*Sittlichkeit*, public opinion, international morality, etc.—had been questioned. Those who doubted, those who said, "All codes of law would be useless without the backing of the police," were proved right. In the present state of the world-society, some stronger sanction than any of those now in being has been shown to be necessary if international pledges, agreements, and laws, are to gain certain observance. What is that stronger sanction to be? In this question of "sanction" lies the kernel of the question of a permanent peace.

To make this clear, let us examine exactly what is to be aimed at in order to make peace permanent. It has been postulated that the way lies along the path of Compulsory Arbitration. Now, Compulsory Arbitration resolves itself into two component parts:

1. The necessity to arbitrate.
2. The necessity to carry out the award of arbitration.

The distinction is an important one, and the two sections of the subject may need different treatment. If national peace is to be maintained, the first axiom must be that all causes of dispute are to be brought to arbitration; the second axiom, that when arbitration has done its work its award must be respected. Of these two axioms, the former is, possibly, even more vital than the latter, as will be seen by the fact previously remarked on—that, although disagreements as to the award under arbitration have occurred, no war has been initiated by any question which has once been brought to arbitration. The first need is, therefore, to

compel all international disputes to be brought to some arbitral court, and to prevent the flaring up of international passion into war by interposing the delay necessary to a presentation of the national case before international judges. If this advance alone could be accomplished, the probability of war would be almost eliminated. Assuming the existence of the machinery of international arbitration (a point which shall be discussed later), how are the nations of the world to be compelled into using it? Here enters the question of "sanctions." For after the experience of the present war it must be regretfully admitted that arbitration treaties may go the way of treaties of neutrality, and be disregarded under stress. The institution of arbitration treaties between all the Great Powers would, however, be by no means valueless. It is a great point to get anything set down in writing. The written word is the scaffolding by which the edifice of international morality is erected. A notable instance of the reinforcement afforded by a definite contract is to be found in the history of the neutrality of the Great Lakes. Often during a hundred years were responsible statesmen of the peoples on each side of these Lakes urged to put ships of war thereon. What really settled the matter, and enabled the statesmen to withstand the passion of the multitude, was the fact that it was possible to point to a written agreement. By all means, therefore, let there be arbitration treaties. They are a first and great step towards a permanent peace. Nor need these arbitration treaties at first cover the whole world. It is of immense importance to remember that any concerted action taken by merely the Powers engaged in the present war would be sufficient to establish an authority which would be world-wide. A League of

Peace (the feasibility of which shall be dealt with later on) formed of these belligerent nations could inflict its will on any other nation or group of nations. Without doubt, moreover, if the intention of such a League were beneficent, no exterior nation would refuse long to join it.

Suppose, then, that this first step has been accomplished, and that among the terms of peace is one involving mutual arbitration treaties between all the Powers lately at war; how are these arbitration treaties to be enforced? What is to prevent any nation disregarding the obligation to submit a case to an arbitral court? In the first place, as has been said, the fact that definitely and solemnly that nation has undertaken to submit to arbitration must weigh for something, and many may consider that this in itself is sufficient, or, at all events, all that is possible, and will be content to leave matters at that. If nothing more is found feasible, the attainment of this end will, no doubt, be in itself a great accomplishment. Let us consider, however, whether more cannot be attained, and some sanction discovered which no nation could disregard.

And here it is time to deal with the second of the sections into which Compulsory Arbitration has been divided—that of the possibility of enforcing the awards of any arbitral court. For, obviously, the same sanction which would be potent to compel a nation to arbitrate would be potent to make it accept the award of arbitration. This brings us to the general subject of sanctions which was premised to be the kernel of the whole subject of International Peace.

Up to the present, the sanction which has been chiefly relied on for the enforcement of international agreements and international morality has been that of public

opinion. It would have been presumed, for instance, that, should the Great Powers now engaged in war agree afterwards mutually to abide by arbitration, they would keep their word. The dangers of secret treaties and cabals—an obvious danger—would have been discounted by the fact that international morality, that *Sittlichkeit* of nations to which Lord Haldane referred in Canada, had developed sufficiently to be relied on as a sanction. This may still prove to be the case; but the lessons of the war have undoubtedly gone far to diminish confidence that it will be so. Failing reliance on the force of public opinion, to what other sanctions can we turn?

The sanctions generally recognized or mooted by students of international politics are the following, and the difficulties they involve shall be briefly noted as they are enumerated:

1. *Public Opinion*, or *Sittlichkeit*, whose throat may be said to have been cut by the author of its name.

2. *The Mutual Advantage of Peace*, which, however axiomatic, is obviously not to be depended upon for the present.

3. *Reprisal*, which has been termed a “non-amicable mode of redress short of war”; but this, in almost every instance, leads to war and is tantamount to it, and in its subheads of hostile embargoes and pacific blockades is merely an interstate sanction which has nothing to do with the international enforcement of peace.

4. *Intervention*, which has been defined as a “dictatorial interference of a third State in a difference between two States for the purpose of settling the difference in the way demanded by the intervening State.” This, too, is a “localized” sanction, almost certainly leads to war, and does not pertain to the international enforcement of peace.



5. *Retorsion*, or “injurious reciprocity in legal acts,” exemplified in differential import duties or equally disadvantageous treatment of subjects. This is also purely “local,” almost always involves cumulative disadvantage to both parties, and is outside the scope of any international sanction for peace.

6. *Security*—that is to say, the deposit of a sum of money, to be forfeited if the agreement entered into by the covenanting State is not observed. This idea is more promising. It partakes of an international character—*i.e.*, it could be utilized between a group of nations mutually binding themselves to observe peace; and it does not postulate force. The interest of the money would, of course, accrue to the depositing nation until any breach of agreement forfeited it. The chief questions which arise in connection with this scheme of security are—

(a) Who would hold the money, and to what use would it be applied when forfeited?

(b) What machinery could be constructed for the depositing and forfeiting of such money which would not involve difficulties with private individuals or “shareholders”?

(c) The sanction of security would, obviously, only be effective so long as the amount to be forfeited was considered greater in value than the gain to be obtained by war. If, however, practicable means of obtaining security were devisable, this sanction might be used either alone or in conjunction with other sanctions to preserve the peace of the world.

Guarantees and suretyship come under this heading of security; but from an international point of view cannot be held to be practicable.

7. *Seizure of Property on Breach of Agreement*. This,

obviously, involves force of some kind, and would lead to war unless the force were so overwhelming as to be irresistible, in which case breach of agreement would not have been likely in the original instance. Moreover, the force employed must either be merely that of another nation engaged in the dispute or of a combined body of nations. This latter point comes under another heading and shall be approached later. Further, seizure of property, consisting either of territory or other wealth, must inevitably involve injustice to private individuals.

8. *Commercial Pressure*, either by boycott, tariff reprisals, or refusal of credit. This might, by agreement, be made an international sanction, though it is primarily assumed to be merely used between two States. But, however used, this sanction has an insurmountable defect—it inflicts penalty on the punisher as well as on the punished. As Mr. Foulke himself confessed, dealing with the case of tariff wars: “Personally I think that the result of these wars has been, like the result of most wars, damage to both sides.” This more obviously applies also to boycott and refusal of credit.

9. A coercing power sufficient to compel a nation or any number of nations to remain at peace, or to return to peace after the outbreak of hostilities, has often been asserted to be that of the *General Strike*. Until, however, the development of Socialism and the internationalizing of labour has progressed a good deal farther than it has to-day, this drastic and extreme sanction, if such it can be called, cannot be held to be practicable. It stands, moreover, on another plane than that of the international arbitration treaty, and involves questions of forces outside our present limits of discussion, invoking as it does class war to overcome race war. In

the end it may prove the way out. Sufficient now to say that it has proved ineffective to-day.

10. A number of sanctions have now been examined. The only ones which are capable of international application have been seen to be those of Public Opinion; the Mutual Advantage of Peace; Security; Commercial Pressure; and, dubitably, the International Strike. None of these sanctions, except possibly that of Security, present hopeful features. But there is one more sanction, perhaps the most obvious, and certainly, if practicable, the most efficacious, which has not been considered, but which demands careful and detailed examination. That sanction is that of *International Force*.

By the sanction of International Force is meant some definite military and naval power which should stand behind international law and morality. As to its uses, such force might be used either to compel arbitration or to compel obedience to the award of arbitration. It is obvious that, if mutual arbitration treaties were in existence between Powers, every employment of International Force would fall into category No. 2. Hence one strong reason for the institution of mutual arbitration treaties, whereby the legitimacy for employing International Force in any instance should be the more clearly defined and substantiated.

As to the form such International Force should take, it is obvious that there are two possibilities. Either such force, which it has been postulated must be of a naval and military nature, can be merely brought together for international use when required, normally remaining merely national; or it can be a definite international body, entirely separate from any national naval and military resources. The former form is probably

the more practicable, the latter the more ideal. The former, however, exhibits certain defects which would not be inherent in the latter. The first form of International Force resolves itself into the constitution of some sort of League of Peace composed of a certain number of Great Powers sworn to peaceful arbitration among themselves, and pledged to combine against any Power breaking that oath. Obviously, if this League of Peace were strong enough, it could also enforce peace even among nations outside its limits. Speaking absolutely accurately, this is not really International Force, but only an *ad hoc* combination of national forces for a certain purpose. Although no League of Peace has yet made its appearance, there have been plenty of examples of nations banding themselves together to coerce other nations at war, or to prevent their making war. As Professor Van Vollenhoven remarks in an article on an international police system in the number of *The Peace Movement* for June, 1913:

“The international compulsion exercised in 1831 and 1832 upon the Netherlands; the Crimean War, in which France and England engaged in order forcibly to defend the rights of Turkey, who had been attacked by Russia; European action in Mexico in 1862; the naval demonstration of 1881 before Dulcigno; the international expedition of 1900 to Peking; the pressure, at first peaceful, and afterwards hostile, brought to bear in 1902 upon Venezuela by the combined fleets of Germany, England, and Italy; and the demonstration of 1913 before Antivari, are historical instances in point.”

Of these instances, probably the most apt is the suppression of the Boxer uprising in 1900 by a co-operation of Great Powers; and it needs little extension of the principle then applied in order to form a permanent

League of Peace. Such a League has been recommended by high authority. The German Emperor himself has, indeed, been credited with a leaning towards the project!—expressed in a conversation with M. Pichon. Mr. Roosevelt concluded his Nobel Prize Address in 1910 by saying:

“Finally, it would be a master-stroke if those Great Powers, honestly bent on peace, would form a League of Peace, not only to keep the peace among themselves, but to prevent by force, if necessary, its being broken by others.”

Mr. Carnegie in an admirable Rectorial Address at St. Andrews in 1905 advocated the same scheme, which, indeed, is not only an obvious one, but has been most seriously and hopefully considered. It is the “sextuple or octuple alliance pledged to act in common against any one disturber of the peace” which Mr. Norman Angell looks to as the outcome of the present war.\* Such a League of Peace would indeed be a notable advance on present conditions; but it nevertheless has its weak points. What is to prevent secret cabals and treaties being formed among the parties to such a League? Aggressive ambition might easily inspire such, and in spite of any arbitration treaties there would then be more Armageddon; for the League is based on treaties, and behind those treaties, in the end, there may be no greater sanction against scheming intrigues than there has been behind other treaties which have been torn up. The thing is not in essence International Force; it is a combination of national forces. It is as if our Police Force were composed of men ordinarily employed in Trade-Unions and Employers’ Associations, etc., and only to be called on in case of strikes and other

\* “Prussianism and its Destruction,” p. 235.

disturbances. It would be better than nothing; but it would still rely ultimately upon a moral sanction which might prove a broken reed.

To go one step farther. There is an intermediate scheme, between those of a League of Peace and a truly International Force, which is worth mentioning. It has been suggested that each nation, while not necessarily pledging itself to use all its forces on any occasion, should earmark certain of its vessels and regiments to act as world police when required to do so. This is ingenious, and has certain advantages which the League of Peace does not possess; but on the whole it combines the defects of the League of Peace and of an International Police. It would not be international, and at the same time it would demand a Central Executive Authority.

The true form of International Force is that which finds itself expressed in what is generally called an International Police. Let it be at once confessed that, although the most ideal of all suggestions, the International Police is an ambitious and somewhat revolutionary scheme. It undoubtedly is not impossible—indeed, it is almost certain ultimately to arrive; but to institute such an arrangement to-day would need courage and genius. The scheme has been seriously and sensibly discussed on many occasions, and always the chief difficulty which has been foreseen has been that of a Central Executive Authority which could control the Force. Whatever particular constitution of an International Police Force may be eventually adopted, there is no doubt that it is not impossible for a group of States to contribute naval and military resources to a joint Police Force, granted they can agree on a joint Authority to control them. The Force itself may be composed and constituted in various ways. It

may be a system of composite regiments and a composite naval force distributed over the whole world. It might absorb a larger or smaller portion of existing armaments. But there is no doubt that it can be formed if nations are willing to do so and can agree as to the International Executive. There would have to be, in addition to the International Arbitral Court and code of law, which are already partly developed, and, indeed, now available, some sort of International War Office and Admiralty internationally sustained—a sort of international Scotland Yard. Details, of which space will not here permit discussion, will readily suggest themselves. But there are probably no practical difficulties which are insurmountable, granted the adherence of a certain number of Great Powers to the central idea. Indeed, anyone who follows out logically the movement towards international peace will probably find that so doing brings him inevitably to the institution of that sanction behind international law which is the parallel of the sanction of the Police which we admit must be behind national law. All other advances along the road towards a permanent peace are but intermediate stages in progression towards this logical end, and none can doubt that, if sufficient boldness and wisdom be found, it is best to eliminate as many intermediate stages as possible.

Finally, it must be remembered that, as Professor Van Vollenhoven truly says: “It is useless to think of limiting armaments until the enforcement of international law has been insured”; and that, as M. Leon Bourgeois has said: “Behind such a rampart as this the nations will be in a position to disarm; without such a rampart they will never be able to do so.”\*

\* *The Peace Movement*, July, 1913.

Events and logic alike prove this. While force is the arbiter, force will be prepared. A frontal assault on armaments expenditure will almost certainly continue to be futile; but turn the flank of the position, and it is won. No nation will uselessly pile up preparations for war when it is convinced that ultimate power lies in the hand of law. So long as he lives in lawless times or in lawless places a man may carry a revolver; but he will discard it when he knows that the police are round the corner, and that the national place of conflict is the Courts.

Is it possible now to complete the unfinished sentence of an imaginary manifesto? Is it at all possible to outline what the democracy should be ready to say they will be prepared to do to attain a lasting peace? Surely there are three stages of possibility, each more promising than the last, and these three can be set forward as objects progressively to be obtained. These three stages are—

1. Mutual treaties of arbitration.
2. A League of Peace to enforce such treaties.
3. A truly International Force to take the place of mere combinations of national forces, and to render as futile the maintenance of great national armaments as our national police have rendered futile the carrying of lethal weapons by the individual.

In the peace which is to come, the first point *must* be attained; the second point should be attained; and the third point might be attained. Let, therefore, the last sentence of our manifesto run thus:

“To this end, when the terms of peace come to be discussed, we are ready to enter into mutual treaties of arbitration with all parties to the peace, covenanting with the other parties to combine with them to prevent



and punish any breach of these treaties or any refusal to abide by an arbitral award; and, lastly, to assist towards the formation and maintenance of some form of International Force which may permanently compel obedience to international law and morality."

All this is not mere idealism. Much of the material is ready to hand. A court of permanent arbitration is in actual existence, and a more adequate "Court of Arbitral Justice" was projected by the Hague Conference of 1907. The code of international law has been so developed that the codified portion could be usefully put into operation and gradually extended; there only remains the reinforcement of this structure by the addition of a sufficient sanction. The provision of this sanction must be the work of the peacemakers at the end of the present war. Nations will be ready for the step forward. Already sober opinion in all the belligerent nations recognizes that after the war normal relationships between these nations will have to be resumed, and is prepared carefully and without passion to consider means of preserving future friendly relations. At the end of the war there will be no division of opinion among the democracies on the point that peace should be permanent. But if they are to attain their object, they must work and they must organize. All the Peace Societies, Congresses, and Movements, should come together, at all events in each nation, and should work with one heart towards the desired end. The danger of idleness or apathy is a grave one. That danger is, that in merely diplomatic hands, and without the controlling will of the people, such a peace may be signed as will involve future war. Such a danger must be averted; and it can only be averted by the democracies themselves. If they are sufficiently far-seeing, courageous,

and zealous, to compel an accomplishment of their desires, they will indeed be able to lay to their credit a great moral and material victory.

### AT LAST !

“ All things come to him who waits.”—*Proverb*.

IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES,  
*Summer, 1915.*

I have just got well in time.

I have not been back at the Battery more than a few days, and my chance of seeing active service has come. It has arrived in the shape of a memorandum asking for one officer to “ proceed overseas ” for a fortnight’s attachment to a Battery at the Front. The memorandum has considerably excited the officers in the Battery, quite needlessly, for I am selfishly sending in my own name.

On the frieze round my bedroom there is a pattern of flowers which looks strangely like a sort of rough writing. Whilst in bed after inoculation the other day I kept gazing at this, trying to fashion it into some sense. At length the words appeared: “ Go June.” And a few days after came the memorandum. I feel quite proud of my prophetic powers !

I suppose no one can go to a place at a time of peril with absolute equanimity. It is not exactly a question of fear. It is the sensation, partly excited anticipation, partly nervous apprehension, which always possesses one when about to play an important match, make an important speech, sing at a concert, act. Only, of course, it is more long-drawn-out. Briefly, one will be glad when it is all creditably over, but one would not

forgo it for anything. I fancy that is how most people regard "going out." Of course there are some who do actually look forward to carnage and hardship with eagerness; but even with them, I fancy, it is more the adventure of it all that appeals than any desire to kill. What happens out there, what modifications of spirit take place, I suppose I shall find out. But I do not imagine I shall either enjoy it all or get used to it all. I do not think my opinion that war is a futile and barbarous business will be changed.

And I have no doubt I shall be in a blue funk!

Well, I shall write frankly of it—probably in the form of letters, which I can append to this diary.



## LETTERS FROM FRANCE

### ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

“ I can’t but say it is an awkward sight  
To see one’s native land receding through  
The growing waters.”—BYRON.

*June 12, 1915.*

I WRITE this by the light of a candle (purchased illicitly at the bar) stuck at the bottom of an empty tumbler. The electric light of the troopship has been cut off at the main since we left port, and obscure forms blunder and collide in the corridors and stumble down the staircases. Outside, under a moonless sky, the dim shape of a destroyer can be just seen, always a little ahead of us—our black guardian angel. It is nine at night.

There is abroad a sense of mingled excitement and suspense. A rough rehearsal of boat-drill has been gone through. For submarines the conditions are superb. One imagines . . . Then one calls oneself a fool. Then one takes off one’s boots and gaiters and lies down in comfort.

I have had amazing luck, and inhabit a cabin to myself. The senior officer aboard and myself shared one, and he has become C.O. of the boat, and been elevated to the glory of a cabin possessing a real gilt and iron bedstead. Hence my solitary luxury. To be C.O. of a troopship means work. All arrangements for the safety of the troops in case of attack or wreck have to be made out; various duties have to be assigned;

guards have to be mounted, orderly officers warned; even a Censor has to be nominated from among a party of retiring and most un-Censor-like officers. The C.O. will be glad when we reach port. His position has quite spoilt the voyage for him.

Departure of a troopship—old style: A crowd of cheering men; weeping and waving women and babies; bands playing. As the boat moves off, the rails of the deck are lined with yelling soldiers. The noise and excitement only wanes when distance removes its potency.

Departure of a troopship—new style: All day long solitary officers have been arriving at the great gates leading to the docks. There they have been questioned, and, on demonstrating their business, have been directed to the Embarkation Officer. No woman, except on special duty, is allowed inside the dock gates. Farewells must be said outside. Later in the day, say about 4 p.m., trains full of jubilant soldiers have run right into the quays themselves. There they have disgorged their occupants, who have piled their arms and kit in the huge sheds once devoted to more peaceful purposes, and made themselves as comfortable as circumstances permit. Some have a talk, some lie and smoke, some just lie. After the first arrival there is little excitement.

The detached officers who keep arriving first interview the Embarkation Officer. He gives them a green *chit* to enable them to draw two days' rations, and a note to another Embarkation Officer nearer the boat. After exchanging the green *chit* for a cardboard box containing about a dozen apparent dog-biscuits, a tin of milk, two small tins of pressed beef, a tin of "Plum and Apple" jam, two little oval tobacco-like tins



THE YSER CANAL, NEAR YPRES





labelled "Grocery Rations," and sundry mysterious paper packets, these officers proceed to the second Embarkation Officer. He is a genial old Colonel with a fire-and-brimstone manner, but a good heart.

"My senior officer," he bellows, "says no one must take his baggage on board yet. But," he goes on more confidentially, but still as if condemning a criminal, "if I were you, I should run it as near the boat as I could in a cab, and then drop it on board—at my own risk, of course. Anyone taking the best cabins," he finishes, "is liable to be turned out if senior officers afterwards arrive."

Then all go on board. After taking cabins (with due regard to the kind advice of our fire-eating friend), there is an hour to spend before we need finally "join our ship." Some spend it in driving round Southampton; some are once more "seen off." At last all assemble on board.

Then the men march on. First the R.E. in single file marshalled by a subaltern, and directed to their places by a capable ship's under-officer. Next the R.H.A. and R.F.A. The leading draft are a somewhat weedy lot. "Wouldn't change 'em with my chaps," whispers a Territorial R.H.A. Major to his neighbour. But the next lot are stronger and more disciplined-looking. I suppose it depends on the locality whence they are drawn. Then comes a third draft of artillery, and all are aboard. We are only taking about 700 men over, and our boat is small and fast. The men themselves are quiet and well-behaved; an occasional "Tipperary" or more recent ditty is the limit of their noise-making. And none are drunk. The only man who has evinced any signs of super-cheeriness is one of the boat's officers, who asks me who the C.O. is, and,

when I say, "Colonel Bowling," replies, "Not my ole frien' Tom Bowling? I shall have to make the acquaintance of Colonel Bowling. . . ." Then he goes off walking just a little too straight to be convincing.

There is a long wait. It is seven before we are off; and, coming up from a chop (rations are not compulsory), I am just in time to see the last wharf of the docks slide past. Fifteen years ago I saw it slide past from the deck of another trooper. But that was on a very different mission—merely taking a draft to India. To-day there is a grimmer feeling in the air. And we do get some cheering, after all. The crews of the boats we pass give us our send-off, and we pass little groups of waving men till at last we creep out through the great boom. The final and most uproarious interchange of salutations is between ourselves and three girls in a boat.

As the land draws away into the twilight, I wonder for how many of these cheering lads it will be their last sight of home.

Now, as the nights when I shall get any rest to speak of may not be many, and as the light is a little trying, I will finish this, and try to sleep, despite the thought of submarines and despite the stifling atmosphere of my little den.

GRAND HÔTEL MODERNE,

*June 13, 1915.*

One has to write when one can on these occasions. Hence it is only half-past nine in the morning, and I am writing again. But quite a lot has happened since last night. The night itself was disturbed. The men apparently preferred step-dancing to sleeping, and indulged themselves immediately over my head. Then,

about 2 a.m., there came shouts and glares and a general sense that we were getting somewhere. I slipped on boots and breeches (the under part of my attire had not been removed), and went out to get tidings. Of course I got none, but we were obviously entering port. I reflected that, although no one, not even the C.O., knew when we were disembarking, all the men had to get off before the boat went on to another port, and during their disembarkation I should have time to get dressed and put my things together. Moreover, the noise of the men assembling would wake me. So I went back to "bed" (a blanket over me in my "undies"). But, of course, my subconscious mind kept conscientiously waking me every half-hour, "lest the men should be going." Also two bumps against the quay brought me up on deck a little later. At 5.30 a.m. I gave it up, collected my shaving tackle, and went to the washing-place. Then breakfast—or, rather, an attempt at it. After half an hour comes a plate of cold beef and a cup of alleged tea. Not tempting at this hour; but a plate of cold beef in the interior is worth a dozen boiled eggs in the kitchen, so down it goes.

At half-past seven we actually leave the boat. Owing to absence of servants, we have to hoist our own baggage up and over the side, a delicate proceeding. My predecessor manages to drop his valise in between the side of the boat and the quay, which inspires me to "put" mine a record distance, nearly killing an obliging sailor who is waiting to receive it. Then we sit on our baggage and wait till the Embarkation Officer comes to tell us where to take it (I get an R.E. to take mine). Abandoning as much luggage as we safely can in a friendly tin shed on the quay, and trusting to see it later, we perspire along the dockside towards the town. Some (immedi-

ately christened "the idle rich") get on a motor lorry, which is to start later, and which does eventually overtake us, with jeers.

In the early morning the town looks more picturesque across the water than an English port ever could. The old-fashioned houses with their Southern-looking shutters; the vista of roofs rising till they merge into a dim line of trees; the high dock walls; the still, iridescent water—all make a delicate symphony of grey and green; while in the foreground there starts out a splash of colour from the flags and painted funnels of steamers lying at the wharves. We toil in the growing heat, labouring under our equipment, over bridges, past a light grey French torpedo gunboat, up into the quaint old town itself. My companion leaves me to do the talking, and as a result I am not quite sure we get the shortest way to the Hôtel Moderne. But we do get there, and of course I betray no doubts as to the excellence of the route.

The men have all marched off some time ago, under the subalterns who are taking them out. We detached officers have to report to the D.A.Q.M.G. "not before 11 a.m." So there is time to look round. Somehow the sense of war is swallowed up for the moment in the sense of being in a foreign land. The fronts of the houses, the faces of the people, the speech and accent of the passers-by—one exults in the variation from the normal. One is abroad. One forgets one is going to the war. Nor is it merely variety that pleases. Certainly the French town is less hideous than the English. Certainly the French woman does her hair better than the English woman.

Thus the walk to the hotel is hot, but delightful. Arrived, we meet "the idle rich," who have got there

first, though they were jettisoned a good way from their destination. They are in the middle of a second breakfast. "No," I think. Then I look at the little rolls and smell the café au lait, and sit down: we both sit down.

After breakfast I send a telegram home to say I have arrived. It is a solemn business. All I say is "Arrived safely, had good breakfast"; but there is obviously a risk of intrigue in this message, and after I have handed it in to the clerk, and he has scrutinized it, he sends me round to the Censor. He sends me the right way, but *en route* I meet an old man who courteously goes quite a long way out of his road to put me wrong. Consequently it is some time before I find "La Bourse," and, ascending three flights of stairs, present myself before the Censor (a harmless Captain). He inspects the form and hands it back. "Write it in block capitals, please." I do. "Now sign your name and regiment, in your own handwriting, at the end." I do. He takes the form back, stamps it, fills in "dix" as the number of words, and I labour back to the telegraph-office. Then my telegram actually goes, on payment of 2 francs.

On the whole there is little evidence of the war in the town itself. There are not many more than the normal number of French soldiers about, and the only evidence of the true situation is to be found in the presence of our khaki-clad men here and there. Also, when I went to wash my hands, the German directions on a certain notice were scratched out, and above them was written: "Langue morte." Also: "A bas les Bosches!"

Now I sit at a tiny table outside the hotel, and write this while I wait till eleven comes. The sun is out; the street a yard or so away throbs with life; pretty girls pass, and sometimes stare. Life is jolly.

POPERINGHE STATION,  
*June 16, 1915.*

The last days have gone by with a rush. Travelling by night, and weariness and business by day, have left no time for writing. Now I must try to collect thoughts and incidents.

I changed my mind as to the war and port of disembarkation before I left. There was one sign that the French nation was at war which soon impressed itself, and that was the number of women in mourning. Every other woman wore black. Many were cheerful, some even appeared flirtatious—but they wore black. It was a town in mourning.

We stayed nearly two days in the end.

Our stay at the port of disembarkation was quite pleasant. We (that is, three of us) bathed, we walked, we had a most interesting conversation with a French sergeant, who in times of peace was a professor in the University of Alberta at Edmonton. He told us the secret of the badges of rank of French officers—the lines on the hat; he showed us over the French barracks; he explained the constitution of a French regiment, and how the reserves and territorials differed and could be distinguished; he discoursed on the possibilities of a permanent peace, on the necessity for physical training, on what training in courage and character could take the place of war (which he thought odious and uncivilized); and in the end he insisted on taking us to the hotel and giving us an “*apéritif*.”

Our hotel was fairly comfortable. It had a pleasant proprietor, one very surly waiter, the largest eggs I have ever seen, and no bath. We all had to fill up most detailed particulars of ourselves on forms, and

one Major caused some amusement by inserting after "Prénom," "une nuit."

The inhabitants seemed to love the English. Not only do the young ladies treat them with particular effusion, but even the little children run up to shake hands, looking up with adoring eyes, and crying "Good-night! Good-night!"

I went to see the French recruits being called up. They were a class called up before their time, but all glad to go, and looking half foolish, half proud, behind the huge bouquets of tinsel and artificial flowers with which hawkers provide them just outside the Town Hall. They can also buy badges with their "year" on them, and small "fit" badges. I bought a couple as souvenirs. One read, "Bon pour le service"; the other, "Bon pour les filles."

This port is a great base, and the stores of every imaginable article, the clearing-house of things sent back from the battlefield, the hospital, the veterinary hospital, are all wonderful sights.

We left the D.A.Q.M.G.'s office in the evening, after a half-hour's wait for our "bus"; we were already getting accustomed to waits. Then we buzzed down the streets to the docks, where we threaded in and out of the quays and store sheds till we came to the train. It was dark, and the great docks, with the still and starlit sky above them, made an impressive picture. Suddenly out of the gloom a voice greeted me: "That you, sir? I was in the 80th at Sangor!" An old N.C.O. of my battery in India, now doing the "seating" on the train. We chat about old times over a cup of chocolate in the Y.M.C.A. coffee-shop. Then "Good-bye and good luck!" and the train rumbles off into the dark.

Rouen came at 4 a.m., after a night of fitful sleep. Indeed, a good many of us are getting just a little worn by the curious hours, stuffy trains, etc. Rouen must be seen, breakfast got, and we have to report at 9.30; so I get up in a little, shave on the footboard of the carriage, and walk off to the town. By good chance I meet a kindly Captain of a sanitary section, who invites me to a most excellent lecture on Poison Gas and other devilments, and I accordingly repair thereto. A good-natured driver of a Red Cross car takes me out—it is a few miles away from Rouen; and after I have picked up some hints about an incinerator and the purifying of water, my Captain friend and I get into another Red Cross motor, and soon reach the place of the lecture. This is in the midst of one of the most beautiful woods imaginable, tall straight pines, with, beneath, a carpet of pine needles on sand, flecked by the sunlight. Into this cool and restful paradise marches company after company of men, hot and weary. They lie down, and we hear of German atrocities and how to counter them. That done, back to my friends, and thence by tram (after a lunch of bread and cheese at a tiny inn) to Rouen.

In the afternoon I sit some time in the solemn Cathedral. It is good for the soul to sit in calm and beautiful places now and then, and reflect. That is why all temples are to me holy; for there, be they of whatever religion, I can worship in my own way. So I sit and think, and watch young widows murmur prayers and young soldiers make vows. Then back into the glare and bustle, to interchange views with a French barber who cuts my hair. He, like all others, hates the war and longs for peace. But it must be fought out—and then no more wars.



We have a wash before the train goes out, and afterwards an untidy meal off our army rations. Great fun, though. But one does want a respirator for a French tunnel.

Another night of discomfort, and in the morning we at last are driving on straight for that line of country where the world is at grips.

Curiously we watch the names of the stations slip past—St. Omer; Hazebrouck . . . Still the country basks in the sunlight, as if war were a thing unknown. At last at Abele, as the train stops and I lean out, I hear the heavy sound of a gun. As yet, though, nothing else. On a mile or two; there, far in the air, hangs a slanting sausage, tied to earth by a thin network of cords, and trailing a tail of what look like hanging footballs. We are there at last. Yes! And we get out and pile our kits on the platform. There is no more train; the railway runs on—into the German lines.

We are at the front!



## YPRES

“ In that day . . . there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills. . . . That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation.”—ZEPH. i.

*June 17, 1915.*

I AM sitting up in “ bed ” in what remains of a Belgian public-house. As I wrote “ house ” there was a distant “ pom ! ” and then a peculiar sound as of a motor-car pulling up too suddenly—a kind of dying whirr—overhead somewhere; then a shattering roar. That was a high-explosive shell, otherwise a “ crump,” falling about 200 yards down the road. It has happened seven times since I began to write this. I hope they don’t take it into their heads to turn a couple of hundred yards to their right. It is 6.20 a.m., and the Germans are having their morning “ hate.” At the moment they are shelling, as I say, a spot about 200 yards away, at a cross-roads, called popularly here “ Suicide Corner,” for obvious reasons.

They have stopped bombarding now—luckily, without thinking of turning a degree or so to the right; but I understand that they begin again later, a little to our left. I am in the Officers’ Mess, which is the said ruined pub.; but the officers don’t sleep here, having “ dug-outs ” with the Battery, a bit farther back. I think I may sleep out to-night (unless I go into the front trenches), as houses aren’t “ healthy.”

At the time I write I may not set down where we

are; the Censor wouldn't let it pass. However, I might say that we are within a very short distance of a famous city, the utterly ruined fabric of which one can see only too plainly. Also I may pass on the remark of an officer who cheerily assured us that we had come to a "bad corner" (which means a good corner from the point of view of seeing things). You may possibly guess from this, and from other pieces of information which may leak out later, whereabouts we are; though, of course, you oughtn't to!

Just at the moment there is absolute peace, save for the whirr of an aeroplane. Ordinarily there is plenty of liveliness. Not only is there the pom! whee-rr-rr! crash! of the high explosive, but also the sound of our own guns, which fire from behind us, and send their shell with a nice satisfactory little scream, pee-ew! and then, in some cases, a reverberating thunder afar off. Also there is the noise of the "Little Willies," the 15-pounder German shell; and of course the rapping of the machine guns, and the constant roll—like a churning—of rifle fire. Often this is far off, or most of it is; but sometimes one kind of noise will start off quite close, and then one sits up and takes notice—at least, one does if one is new to it. Old hands don't seem to mind much.

This house was shelled a little time ago, and is pretty shattered, holes in the roof, etc.; but lately they haven't come nearer to it than 50 yards. Still, no doubt its turn will come again soon (the Germans seem to have a programme); and then let us hope there will be a few inaccurate rounds to give us time to clear out.

*Later.*

It is later in the day now, and the firing has begun again. We walked down from the Mess to the Battery

just now, and, as we got there, there was a whistling from a man lying on his back. Down we all flopped, and looked as much like weeds as possible. Then more whistling, and we got up again. The Taube had passed away. It was interesting to see the strings of bursts round the aeroplane, which went on pretty unconcernedly, and vanished at last over the German lines.

To go back to yesterday. When I closed my letter I was just off to this place. The motor transport sent for us was insufficient, so I got on the roof, and held on precariously as we rumbled nearer and nearer the firing line. It was a busy road that we came along: Red Cross motors, transport, men on horses, Belgians walking, staff officers in motors, and the road with a high *pavé*, off which we went at an angle, sometimes, which made me cling on by my eyelids. At last we turned down a most inferior lane, and found ourselves at headquarters (of the ammunition column of the Division). Here was a Colonel whom I had met before; a cousin of a man whom I once played when golfing for the House of Commons *v.* Ranelagh. After much confusion and delay, we got off with our kits in a waggon to the Brigade ammunition column. Here a nice Captain met us, gave us a drop of beer, and provided us with horses to get up to our Batteries on. I had a nice gee, jumped little brooks, etc., *en route*, and eventually, after two miles or so, got to the Battery waggon line. One step nearer the scene of operations. By this time we were only about two or three miles from the actual trenches, perhaps a little more; big guns were firing round us, and the ruins of a church (demolished by a German armoured train) made us aware that we were well in range of the enemy. At the

waggon line (excuse joggle; a bang came so close that I jumped) our nice Captain abandoned us, the Colonel who came out with us and myself came to this Battery, and the Q.M.S. telephoned to the Major to say we had arrived. More horses were ordered for us, and we again set off. After half an hour's ride, just as it was getting dark, we found the Battery. The Major welcomed us, and we sat down to food—good food—and lemon and soda (this is practically a teetotal mess). Afterwards talk and bed.

They are such a nice lot. Cheery as can be. The forward observation officer came in during dinner, much pleased with his dug-out in the trenches. "Little-Willie-proof now," he announced proudly, "and I'm not sure it isn't Crump-proof. And you got 'em nicely with that one round this afternoon," he went on. "They were pushing up a plank out of their trench—could just see their hands all heaving up together, and the tops of their helmets. Then you let go, and it burst just beautifully. Plank went down with a plop." "Did it come up again?" someone asked. "Not much!"

They apparently had a real "hate" on here yesterday, and hit an outhouse just behind. Bits of it came about, and some hit the Adjutant, who retired from the Mess in haste. Another "hate" is expected this afternoon; in fact, a bit of a counter-attack (with or without gas). We are promised a trip to the trenches this afternoon. "A few bullets about, I dare say," the Major said with a smile, when I asked a little nervously whether it was safe to go up before dark. One gets used to it, I suppose.

*June 17, 1915.*

I have just come back from a little walk to view the German lines. Hitherto, I confess, I have been a little

chary of the idea of exposing myself to the direct view of the enemy, even at a long distance. But this morning three of us started to seek what we could see, and took the road outside the ruined public-house in which the Officers' Mess has found a home. This road is a favourite one in the enemy's eyes. Besides "Suicide Corner," just a couple of hundred yards away from the Mess, there are other points at which it is pitted with shell-holes—particularly one section to which the Germans devote their evening "hate," lasting from about 3 p.m., sometimes, until dark. Just there the top part of a tree is lying across the road, while close beside it another is half overthrown, with a huge cavity laying bare its roots. Now we turn to the right, and after a hundred yards we come to the high banks of the Yser Canal. These present a remarkable spectacle. First comes a huge bank, rising out of the surrounding country to the height of about 40 feet. Then there is a descent of over 50 feet to the canal, which has on each side of it a towpath. A similar bank to that on the near side rises beyond the canal. It is the banks which excite comment. For each is honeycombed with cave-dwellings, until it resembles a gigantic rabbit-warren. Every kind of burrow is there—large and small, square and round, crude and finished. As we approach, it looks as though one wall had fallen from a block of tiny tenements, disclosing the interiors. On the sheltered side of the far bank it is the same. And here, above, are fighting trenches, which I may not describe, and shall not attempt to. In the middle runs the canal, and to-day the men are bathing like schoolboys, splashing and shouting in the midday sun. On the far bank they are standing or sitting outside their dwellings, like rabbits at the mouth of their holes, some cleaning

equipment, some writing letters, some asleep. A few wooden crosses mark the sites of soldiers' graves. We cross the canal and mount the other bank. At the top the whole stretch of country comes into view.

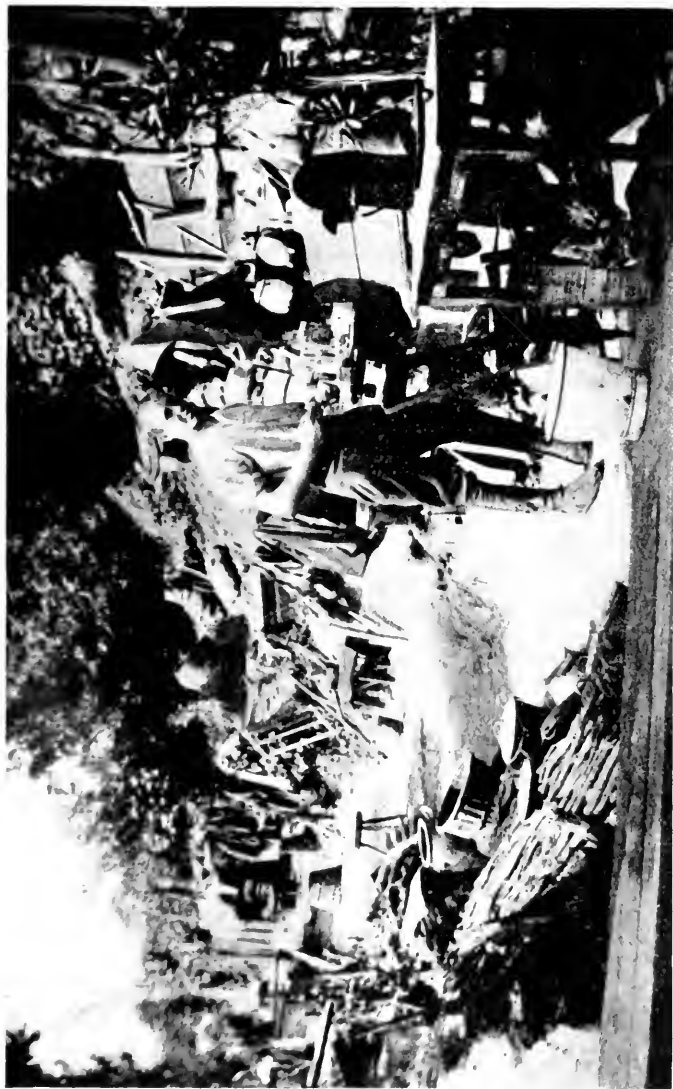
"Are the German trenches in view?" I ask.

"Yes," says the Major, who is conducting us; "there they are, about 1,500 to 2,000 yards away." And there indeed they are, grey-brown ridges on the green. I take out my glasses and look. No human being, only those ridges of earth. "They don't fire at one or two people?" I inquire, aware that I am in full view of the Bosches. "No; it's not worth it."

I feel safer!

It is extraordinarily interesting. The whole field of battle lies stretched out before one. First the long lush grass and bending corn of the fields of Flanders, lying peaceful and beautiful as if the horrors of war never existed. Beyond, the charred and shattered walls of ruined farmsteads. Beyond, again, the network of trenches—first our own; then, hardly distinguishable from them, the Germans'. Lastly, on the horizon, rows of poplars, little deserted farm-houses, and more rows of poplars. All is absolutely still in the midday heat, save where single khaki figures here and there move down a road across the fields. But, as we look, suddenly a black splash of smoke appears low down in the blue sky, and almost simultaneously another, black and brown, spreads to its left. Two "Black Marias," one in air, one on graze. The double report has hardly reached us before there is a crash from behind us, and a shell from one of our heavy Batteries goes screaming overhead in an ever-dying wail till, far away beyond our ken, there is a dull rumbling report. We sit on the top of the bank and enjoy the view and the sensa-





DRAGON IS ON THE BANK OF THE YSER CANAL



tion of nearness to the centre of things. A little later, and we also shall wend our way, like those solitary figures, over the fields and up to the advanced trenches, with perhaps the "couple of bullets," that the Major refers lightly to, singing past us. But now we make our way home to lunch, over a pontoon, past some French soldiers' graves, and past, too, a smell which suggests that burial cannot always be carried out so efficiently as greater leisure would permit.

*June 19, 1915.*

The ruin in which the Mess is housed is called "Herberg de Rooden Hert." Until last night I slept here; now I have moved into the dug-out of the Captain, who has gone on five days' leave to England. The dug-out is a typical one—a small oblong "grave" about 10 feet long by 5 feet broad, with a shelf at one side, on which I sleep in my valise, and a table commandeered from some farm. Last night I was comfortable, after I had dealt faithfully, and laboriously, with some insistent flies, including one of the enormous and obscene blue-bottles which infest the country, and especially the trenches. He was a beast.

Before I crept down into my burrow I looked round at the night scene. Above was the deep immeasurable sky, studded with the familiar stars, and placid as death. Lower down, round the horizon, the peace was broken. Our line where we are is pushed out into a sharp salient, so that the enemy are on three sides of us. And so from almost every quarter of the skyline come evidences of the great and tragic drama which is being enacted. It is like some huge pyrotechnic display. From the north and the south and from the east there comes in succession the glaring brilliance of a flare. A graceful

Roman-candle-like point of light soars into the air, describes a curve, and falls again. Time after time along three parts of the horizon this is repeated. And let him beware who is creeping up to his place in the trenches when the baleful light falls on him. Let him lie close and still until the dark returns and the sniper takes his rifle from his shoulder.

Nor is it the eye alone that is made aware of war. From that same circle of skyline which is lit by the fitful flares, there comes the continual and monotonous crepitation of rifle fire. It is like some far-spreading machinery with a perpetual plip-op ! plip-op ! plip-op ! Something between a hundred tremendous cisterns dripping and a gigantic churn turning. Or like passing a cricket-field with many persons at nets. All night long that sound will continue—the unceasing, indefatigable sound of the snipers. And all night long behind the lines the stray bullets will cheep on their way. War halts not for darkness.

Far to the north a big gun is firing. First a dull bang and a flicker of light, then the whooshing rush of a distant shell, then another dull bang. Another gun joins it; then a German howitzer replies. A little later these larger brethren sink to sleep, and there is only the untiring churn of the snipers, the endless succession of flares.

And above all these puny and spiteful efforts of mortal man stretches the star-pierced curtain of the immemorial night, serene and unmoved.

“ My God ! we are small things ! ” I think as I crawl down to my bed.

The “ Herberg de Rooden Hert ” is a murdered home. At first one does not realize it; one conceives it only as a ruin—something that has died and decayed.

Later one sees that this is not so. The mattress on which I spent my first night was slept on by its owner only a few weeks ago. A cupboard in the corner contains still a dusty array of cheap crockery. Wood has been plundered from the walls and staircases, and the roof is rent by hideous shell gashes. But the tragedy of this place was sudden and untimely. Upstairs there is a sad and sorrowful confusion. The summer air drifts in through the paneless windows. Dismantled and derelict pieces of furniture stand at any angle or lie overturned. On the floor lies a mangled waste of pathetic odds and ends: tattered articles of women's attire, a few shattered images, pieces of cloth, battered hats, torn books, and in the corner, quite untouched, a framed photograph of the one-time master and mistress of the "Herberg de Rooden Hert." A plump, comfortable-looking man he was, with crisp upturned moustaches and a homely, good-natured-looking wife. Musical they were, for there are sheets of music among the débris; and they had children, for there are toys and sorrowful little children's books. Where are they all now?

Where, indeed! For these folk have gone, vanished, they are no more. I went into the city of Ypres only yesterday; it is a Pompeii of the present. It is past description; to seek for words is but to summon tears. Ruin! Ruin! Ruin! Bricks and stunted walls; torn streets, and yet more heaps of bricks; and towering above all the shattered remnant of the glorious Cathedral. As you walk the silent streets you weep in your heart for the folly of man. It is too great for the mind and spirit to grasp, the horror of this. It is the abomination of desolation—and it is the work of man. Bricks, and fallen stones, and torn earth, and wrecked beauty, and

through it all a horrible evil stench that tells of death. The senses stagger.

Looking through the archways of half-fallen walls, I see hanging on a fragment of a house one solitary cheap little plate. I clamber over the débris, cautiously avoiding touching the tottering masonry, and take it down. Also I pick up two unbroken tiles. These to remind me of what was once Ypres—though God knows I shall never forget it !

To wander on through the stricken streets is only to deaden sensation; no more can be felt after a certain point. The magnificent Cloth Hall is a riddled shell, through the gaps in which can be seen the torn fragments of the ancient frescoes. Just outside is the pit of a 17-inch shell, the size of a small cottage.

As I leave this city of the dead there comes the ominous cry of a shell overhead, and then a crash in an adjoining street.

They have not done enough yet !

Of course, movements of men would give the show away to aeroplanes. But on the first sign of a German Taube—three whistles, and every man pops into a hole of some kind. One more whistle—the plane is gone, and the Battery resumes its normal life.

One has to be pretty nippy in this life. Not only have Taube and shells to be thought of, but there is gas. Gas is a living reality, and no man can afford to treat it lightly. Consequently, one has one's respirator *always* slung from one's shoulder, or at night hung by one's side. Gas can knock one out in a few seconds. Also it lasts about four hours. Jolly stuff !

I think I have now found out the pet names of almost all the German shell. The two chief divisions are into "Crumps" and "Little Willies." "Little Willies"

may be either shrapnel or high explosive, but they never rise to the dignity of being "Crumps." "Crumps," in their turn, vary among themselves. There are "Black Marias," "Woolly Bears," and "White Hopes," which may be called minor "Crumps"; and "Jack Johnsons," which are the major "Crumps." "Coal-boxes," I understand, are a species of "Jack Johnson," but are totally black when they burst, whereas Jack Johnsons have a yellow tinge. Another classifier set down "Little Willies" alternatively as "Friendly Philips," owing to their comparatively innocuous character; while yet another called them "Whizz-bangs," from their habit of giving only that warning of their approach. Large and noxious high-explosive shell are sometimes called generically "Dirty Dicks." "Archibalds" are anti-aircraft shell. But "Crumps" and "Crumping" will be the feature of this war.

*June 20, 1915.*

I suppose that in this war, as in other matters, familiarity breeds contempt, and that the veteran regards shell fire as a normal factor. I confess I have not attained this indifference yet. The peculiar whistle of shell, apparently just overhead, followed by an earth-shaking "crump" somewhere in the vicinity, brings me out to see about it. Often the proceedings which sound so close are in reality quite a distance away. Sometimes they are not. Yesterday, for instance, we had followed up a little Battery night "hate" by a Brigade afternoon "hate" on various targets in the enemy's front and second trenches. We had just settled in to tea after conducting the operation, when there came the unmistakable sound of a "crump."

This time the Major of the Battery got up and went to the door. We followed just in time to hear the "crump" and to see a cloud of dust rise straight behind the "Herberg," and a few hundred yards away. "They haven't got the line quite right," dryly observed the Major; "I expect the doctor will be annoyed: that's just by his dressing-station." It is the irony of warfare that retaliation almost invariably descends upon the wrong head. We "hate" the German trenches. They telephone back to their artillery, "We are being shelled by an English Field Battery." Then the German artillery does one of two things: either it "crumps" or "Willies" our front trenches, or else it directs fire on some Battery whose position it knows. Since our Battery is as yet undiscovered, we escape the penalty for our "hate." No doubt our time will come; and chance shells do occasionally do something towards a revenge.

It is at night and in the early morning that a bombardment has its greatest psychological effect; and it is then that the Germans like to have a hate. This morning about 3 a.m. I was shaken out of sleep by very heavy "crumping." I put a pair of boots on and protruded myself from my dug-out. The sun was rising, a ball of red fire, from behind the trees which fringe the canal towards the German lines. The pure air of morning bathed my face in a cool and refreshing stream. The sky was practically unbroken blue, save where, high over the ruined city of Ypres, one of our planes voyaged tirelessly up and down, and all round hung slowly drifting cotton-woolly balls of smoke from the enemy's anti-aircraft shell. Below him, to my right, the lovely ruins of the Cathedral and Cloth Hall stood out with delicate clearness in the morning sun-



shine. And away to the north was the "crumping." Like pencils of sound came the persistent cries of the travelling shell, round following round with grim and vindictive swiftness, while sometimes the shrill shrieking actually blended into a chorus. And after every scream came the reverberating crash, till the senses shivered with horror at the merciless brute force of it all. One pictured the place where the shells were falling. . . .

I stood and watched a little, then crept back to my "flea-bag," just in time to hear one last "crump" whistle unmistakably overhead, and burst with a shock that brought bits of earth down from the sides of the dug-out.

*June 21, 1915.*

Yesterday was Sunday. Sunday does not make any difference on active service. It is true the padre ("quite a nice fellow—buries all our chaps") held a short service, but that was absolutely all that distinguished the day from ordinary working days. Otherwise there were the same duties, the same hours, the same "hates." I regret to say that I did not attend the service. I forgot about it, and, coming suddenly into the Mess (*i.e.*, the bar-parlour of the "Herberg de Rooden Hert"), found the padre delivering a prayer from in front of the bar, opposite which hung a coloured supplement from one of the weekly newspapers, representing a decadent-looking young lady, lightly attired and kissing a rose. I backed unostentatiously out, and retreated to the room across the passage. From there I could hear occasional fragments of discourse and devotion. Once there came a frightful bang from a rather unusually close "crump," upon which the congregation next door burst forth with, "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord."

Later in the afternoon I went up to the front observing-station.

I am not gifted with that constitutional indifference to danger which is the most useful form of bravery. I have known this for a long while, and I make no bones about it. Consequently, I am not ashamed to confess that I have been anticipating this journey with apprehension for some time. Always it had been put off, though I had always wished to break the ice; and when one has strung oneself up for a thing several times, the process becomes more trying. Meanwhile the forward observing officers of both the other Batteries of our Brigade had been killed in their observing-stations. Of course, it would be, I reflected, a peculiar piece of bad luck if they happened to hit our observing-station while I was there, or if I were sniped going up to it. But this war business is all a game of chance, and sometimes the odds against life are shorter than other times. Here where I write now there is at every moment the chance that a German shell will blow the Mess and me to smithereens. We live under that menace; but it is not really such a very serious one. Most of the shell whistle over or to one side. It would be exceptionally hard luck, though it has happened. But going to the front observing-station is another matter; the factors are a little different. To get to it, one has first to cross the Yser Canal, then walk, in full view of the distant German trenches, for several hundred yards over some fields. Then one proceeds behind a hedge until only a few hundred yards separate one from the Germans just over the crest. One cannot be seen here, but sniping is constantly going on, and bullets "pee-ew" through the air. Gaining a communication trench after a last bit of exposed road, one

goes down it until one reaches the forward observing-station. There one is, of course, right "in it," and exposure means certain and speedy death. Also, one may be shelled with any variety of shell at any moment; in which case the only thing to do is to sit quiet and hope for the best.

Being, as I say, not a brave man, this journey had fashioned itself in my imagination into an uncomfortably perilous affair. One cannot help thinking of the bad chances, and not the good ones. Sometimes one is all right; at other times there comes that feeling which afflicts one when sitting in the dentist's waiting-room, or when putting one's pads on before going in on the occasion of an important match. "The others do it," one says (as, indeed, one says in these other circumstances); but it does not quite reassure one. One is oneself, and nobody else is.

However, I had more or less got all the worrying over before starting, and when the Major and I walked away towards the Germans on this sunny afternoon I felt curiously at ease. At all events, I was going to do it; it was not much, the old hands thought nothing of it; but it was something I was afraid of, and I was going to do it. I have felt exactly the same when I have got up to make an important speech, about which I have worried for days.

We walked steadily on, past disused trenches filled with tattered and rusty equipment, empty gun-cartridge cases, greatcoats, cartridge belts, clips of unused cartridges, caps, and even decayed rifles. I stopped to note where one of these last lay, so that I might pick it up on the way back. At last we got to the communication trench. A few bullets passed at a distance, but all was singularly and unexpectedly unfrightening. Down the

trench we went, treading along the boarded ways, until the Major suddenly stopped opposite a narrow opening into a tiny dug-out.

“ Here we are !”

I entered. There was only a most exiguous amount of space; sandbags were everywhere, at the sides, underfoot, and upon the boarded roof overhead. A piece of canvas hung over two slits in the front of the dug-out, slits which were only about 6 inches high and a foot long. Through these it was that the observation officer watched the German trenches and observed the effect of our fire. Coming up we had stooped low to avoid showing any portion of ourselves over the parapet of the trench, and, of course, the Germans would have at once sniped any finger or eye that they could see. But our slits were so small and so inconspicuous that the chance of their being hit was practically nil.

I tilted up the telescope which lay in one of the slits and cautiously peeped through. There, before me, lay a network of scars on the face of the smiling fields. All was absolutely still, and the whole ground might have been deserted. But these were the German trenches, only an insignificant number of yards away, and in them lay our enemies. It was an extraordinary sight, an extraordinary situation. There we lay, both armies, hidden, still, inactive, neither daring to show a head or hand. It was like some strange stalemate. Yet all was not dead. Suddenly just above my head there was a quick “ whew !” followed by a bang. “ Little Willie ?” I asked the observation officer. “ Um,” he answered affirmatively. I wondered what a “ crump ” would be like.

“ They sent down about thirty on the trench to our right this morning,” he answered. “ The very first fell

plumb on a man who was lying at the bottom of the trench. Damned hard lines! Only casualty, though."

I worked out that the man had cost the Germans, perhaps, a couple of thousand pounds to kill. But, alas! that couldn't weigh with him.

The Major said he would fire a round. It was to be on a trench the Germans were building at an angle with their main trench.

"No. 4. Target 5. Add 100. Percussion. Report when ready," went down the telephone.

"Ready, sir," in a moment or two.

"Fire!"

"Fired, sir."

We peered out of the slits.

After about nine or ten seconds there came the whirr of our shell overhead, and then the puff of a burst on graze almost exactly at the junction of the trenches.

"That 'll stop them putting their heads up," remarked the Major grimly. He had claimed to see several Bosches moving about with impudent effrontery.

"No. 4, stand easy."

Such is war to-day.

Going back, we have a chat with the infantry commander, who pathetically remarks that he is glad his Mess is down the road, "because it's jolly to go down the road." Also I get my abandoned rifle (pity it isn't a German) and two cartridge cases.

And that's over!

*June 22, 1915.*

In the watches of the night, when the close whirr of a shell or the distant reverberation of a bombardment brings wakefulness, one thinks. One thinks of those hundreds of miles of our trenches, lined with soldiers.

One thinks of the hundreds of miles of trenches just a few yards away from them, lined with Germans. One thinks of each side alert, eager, ready to shoot. One thinks of the flares, the flashes, the sniping, all along this sinuous, far-stretching front. One thinks of this going on night after night, night after night—men killing, killing, killing, sometimes in driblets, sometimes, when there is an attack, in masses. One thinks.

*June 23, 1915.*

Last night about seven o'clock the troops on our right delivered an attack. I was reading Shakespeare in my dug-out, and had just got to the lines:

“O, learn to love; the lesson is but plain,  
And once made perfect never lost again,”

when there arose a noise as of some continual and incredibly violent thunderstorm. I knew at once that this was the sound of an artillery bombardment preparatory to an infantry attack, and went up on to the canal bank to watch as much as could be seen. Over a patch of wooded country to the south-east our guns were raining a never-ending hail of high-explosive shell. Presently the German infantry, hard pressed, sent up flares, and the German artillery joined in, shelling our front trenches. It was the most hellish thing I have ever witnessed. Imagine crashes of thunder, not solitary or intermittent, but continuous, overlapping, gathered into groups. Thunder not afar off, but near by, overhead—the kind when the flash and roar are simultaneous. Imagine this going on without intermission for half an hour, the air filled with smoke and flame, the ground shaking and trembling. It is the sheer brutal, merciless fury of the thing that appals.

All this when the bombardment is a couple of miles away. Under that rain of shells itself—one grows sick at the thought!

Presently the tumult decreases. We are making our assault. Then it renews itself; we have turned on the reserve trenches of the Germans. At last the fury of sound dies slowly away. The attack is over. We shall hear what happened in a day or so.

*June 24, 1915.*

Yesterday evening a little party of us went out to reconnoitre a position for a single gun that was to be put up forward to deal with a low-flying German aeroplane, which used to cruise up and down behind the German lines every evening, too low to enable our "Archibalds" to get at him. We arrived at the position that the Major had chosen just as the enemy opened their evening "hate." This time it was directed on the canal bank, which we had to cross to get home. We watched the shell—high-explosive "Little Willies"—bursting with admirable accuracy. They began about a couple of hundred yards up the canal—wh-ew, *pom!* wh-ew, *pom!*—two bursts on graze on the actual bank of the canal. We walked down our little road towards the crossing. Wh-ew, *pom!* wh-ew, *pom!*—two more bursts on the bank a hundred yards nearer the point we were making for. We stopped. The Germans were evidently coming down the canal and sweeping it. The next two would be just about our crossing. "May as well go round," commented the Major of the Battery, and we turned to our right. The next two shells fell into the canal just by the crossing we had intended to take, at the moment we crossed a couple of hundred yards farther down. It is lucky the Germans are such good gunners; one can rely on them.

To-day the wind has gone round from the north-east to the west. We are not sorry. This takes one of his weapons away from our enemy. And it has not been pleasant to have at the back of one's consciousness the knowledge that at any time the forward observing officer may telephone up "Gas" (or "buzz" it up, if he is unable to speak), in which case one would have to go to one's respirator, and one would have to sit down solidly to face it out for any time up to four hours.

And at night—one cannot help a feeling, when one goes to sleep, that some time in the night the gas might steal up, and no one would wake (or be able to wake you a little later).

*June 27, 1915.*

A strange intruder has made his way into the back-garden. He is dumpy and ill-looking, and has a sinister-shaped head. He came this morning, suddenly, and, after rolling over once or twice in the grass, lay down quietly where he still rests. We did not welcome him effusively. On the contrary, everyone kept severely aloof. Presently, as he showed no signs of activity, a bold man approached and measured him for identification. He apparently answered to no specified description, so he was reported to the Brigade Office. After this, a neat little wall of sandbags was built round him, a tin roof placed over him, and he was left—strictly alone. His measurements, by the way, were 14 inches long and  $5\frac{7}{8}$  inches in diameter. We do not like him.

This morning I rode out about six miles to the spot from which, I understand, Mr. Asquith viewed "the Front" on his visit. On the way something was seen of the "back of the Front," and the mechanism which



is necessary to the smooth running of the fighting machine. Not only were there the camps and trenches of resting regiments, the depots of the Army Service Corps and of the Ordnance Department, but all along the *pavé* of the Flemish roads rumbled huge motor waggons bringing every conceivable kind of store up to the fighting line. The whole system is like some mass of thick and tangled stems at the base which gradually thins out and fines away into tiny filaments at the trenches. A miracle of organization. If all our departments were as well run as this, no need to worry.

The inhabitants here are still in their homes, and sit idly at the doors watching the strange prodigies which have come about in their sleepy country-side. They usually understand French, though they say "ja" for "yes"; and in Ouderton I find out our way from a really pretty girl, whose sparkling eyes and merry mouth as she answers my crude French questions are a welcome gleam in the lowering gloom which hangs heavy over the land.

At length we arrive at the point we wish to reach, and from there obtain a magnificent view of the battle line. To the north-east rise the silvery ruins of Ypres, picked out in delicate tracery by a transient beam of sunshine. From the north beyond this, straight in front of us, runs the famous Ypres salient. We can trace the actual contour of the trenches by many an historic spot or ruin, such as the white and black Château of Wytschaete. Farther to the north is the Château Hooge, and thereby the historic village of St. Eloi. It is all spread out before us like a map, and a beneficent Staff officer tells us the story of each segment of the trench-covered line of country where the two armies lie confronting each other. It is a memorable sight, this

panorama of battle, with here and there a hanging cloud of white smoke to tell us that no peace reigns here, even though the mellowing distance and the summer haze soften the horrid reality into a deceitfully serene plain of peace.

To come from this peak of repose back by degrees into the firing line is to journey gradually from heaven to hell.

Certainly one of the chief terrors of the Front is the flies. It is a question which is the worse—the sudden pang of a bullet, and the torment of a wound, or the everlasting torture of a fly-ridden life. Surely something could be done, and ought to be. Unfortunately, there is no doubt where the flies that infest our food and crawl over our faces have been, and the horror of these fat and obscene creatures is a very real one. If science cannot cope with the fly, it fails in a field where its help is vital.

## AT HOME AGAIN

### BACK ONCE MORE

“ There’s no place like home.”—*Ditty.*

IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES,  
*Late Summer, 1915.*

It only took a day to get back.

I started on a sunny morning with the Colonel who had been attached to the same Battery as myself. The night before I slept in a dug-out, despite the jeers of others. Some shell had come very close to the Mess during the day, and I was suddenly possessed of that curious feeling of possible frustration which one occasionally gets when on the verge of attaining something. So I slept in a dug-out. Needless to say nothing happened to the Mess that night, and the others had the laugh of me. But I was unrepentant. I would do the same again, and I told them so. They were not going home.

The Colonel and I proceeded to Poperinghe in the Battery cart. This had been impressed “ somewhere in France,” and was a cross between a waggonette and a baker’s cart. The horse, too, was a local product, and accustomed, apparently, to work which necessitated no hurry. There was no whip; but after a little I cut a switch from a hedge, and progress improved.

The Colonel drove, and the sight of us ambling down the *pavé* of the Ypres-Poperinghe road seemed to cause

some amusement. We did not mind. We were going home.

Even at Poperinghe one's mind was not entirely at rest. Accidents could still happen, though some did not appear to think so. As I sat in the train, a subaltern opposite me sighed with relief: "First time I've been outside shell fire for ten months." As he did so there was a familiar screech and serork, and then a crump fairly close. I have never seen a train move out of a station more promptly than ours did. But one man was hit by a splinter of brick occasioned by one of the half-dozen shell which followed us. Sitting in a railway carriage being shelled, even at eight miles range, is not pleasant.

At last we were free. No shell could reach us. We drank in the sensation. We basked in it. We tasted it slowly, and ruminated over it. It was curious how there came a realization that always, even at the quietest moments out there, there had been a latent, subconscious sense of strain. Men say they do not feel it; they do. They may not know it, but they do. That is why tempers are sometimes bad at the front.

At Hazebrouck we had to wait some hours, and some of us had a ramble round and dinner. Dinner! Real dinner, in peace—with wine and without shells. We revelled. Quietly, cheaply—but we revelled.

Then we went to the station again, to find that no officers were allowed to get on to the train we had been told to go by. It was said to us—I only give the tale as it was told—that a few nights before some "high-born excellency" from a station a little farther down the line had found the train too full when it arrived. Hence, no one must get on before that station. We invoked curses on all such, and got into some carriages

which were eventually attached to a goods train. After a night of slow travel and considerable suffering we arrived at Boulogne at 4 a.m. instead of midnight. A bath, a little sleep at an hotel, and we were off across the Channel. I have often welcomed the first sight of the white cliffs of Dover. I have never welcomed them with quite the same feelings as that day.

And now—the peaceful toil of active service at home, and lectures on “What they do over there”!

### A NIGHT'S “ZEPPING”

“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night.”—Ps. xci. 5.

LONDON,

*October 14, 1915.*

One of the excitements which, it is to be feared, will be denied to our descendants may be summed up in the expression “Zepping.” To “Zep” can be defined as “to look for, see, hear, or have bombs dropped on you by, a Zeppelin,” and secondarily “to search for spies, detect wireless apparatus signalling to aircraft, or engage in any other pursuit connected with the operations of Zeppelins.” Almost every inhabitant of London has been nowadays privileged to partake to a greater or less degree in this occupation in its limited or more extended sense.

Last night we had fairly good sport. Moira and I had chosen that evening to indulge in opera, and we were engaged in pursuing the fortunes of Faust, and more particularly in reflecting what a perfect gentleman the devil was, and how superior in deportment and attractiveness to the more reputable characters of the story,

when our attention was firmly and irresistibly attracted to other fields. The beginning was a faint and almost regular drum-like, booming sound, as if the member of the orchestra who controlled the big drum had lost the sense of his position, and was executing a solo not to be found in the score of the opera. This was immediately followed by a slight commotion in the back part of the gallery, such a commotion as is apt to disturb the political orator when an excited member of his audience has gently to be expelled from the meeting.

“Zepps,” I said to Moira.

The contagion of unrest had not yet spread to the audience as a whole, and Marguerite continued an even and melodious course towards the Jewel Song. But now the booming sounds were unmistakably louder, and all of a sudden there appeared a character (R.U.E.) for whom Gounod had made no provision. A short man in an everyday suit of tweed and with a nervous manner uncompromisingly interrupted Marguerite’s budding ecstasies, which, with their orchestral accompaniment, were brought to an untimely end. Holding up his hand for order, he began, “I am sure everyone will do credit to his country” (loud cheers), after which order was restored with some difficulty. “I feel it my duty to tell you,” he continued, “that bombs are being dropped; but I am sure the audience will do its duty” (renewed cheers). A voice from the gallery: “It’s all over now” (triumphant cheers). “Thank God it is!” from the little man on the stage, who made a relieved and rapid exit, after which Marguerite took up the thread of her story, and received an ovation after the Jewel Song which it is no disparagement of her talents to say was not due only to the excellence of her singing.

Of course it was not “all over,” and even a couple of

hours afterwards flashes in the sky and dull reports told of the continued presence of our invaders; but it was a comparatively normal audience which heard the rest of the opera.

Between the acts some of us went out to see whether the Zeppelin was still on view. Alas! it was not. It had been—"Like an aluminium cigar, sir," as the policeman put it. But it had gone off on other business, to the depression of some and the relief of others.

There was to be a little more "Zepping" before we got to bed. On our way home, just by one of the bridges over the river, my attention was arrested by a series of little sparkles in the sky.

"There they are again," I said to a policeman.

"Oh, them's the sparkles from the trams, sir," he answered cheerfully; but then, looking again: "No, by gum! it ain't. It's them!" And it was.

Ghostly patches of light flitted about the sky, feeling as it were for the enemy among the wispy streaks of cloud which in places obscured the stars. The little sparkles of light glittered about the black depths of night, and after them came a tiny and insignificant crackling as of fireworks.

"They are a long way off," I observed.

And they came no nearer, to the disappointment of the little groups of people who hung about the Embankment and dispersed with reluctance.

Looking out of a back window from my fifth story flat before going to bed, I became aware of a peculiar flickering proceeding from a window opposite and lower down. "Flick, flick," it went, and "flick, flick, flick." "Looks like Morse," I said to myself, and called Moira's attention to it. We decided it could not be a dying

fire, for it proceeded uninterruptedly for ten minutes without increasing or decreasing. With a sigh of resignation (five floors is a long way up, and it was after midnight), I put on my coat and went out to find a policeman.

"Probably nothing," I said to him, "but you had better come and look."

We climbed up. Yes, it was still flicking.

"You wait here, sir, will you, while I go and find out," said the constable; and after a few minutes there was a sound of loud knocking in the street opposite, while the flicking went on and then suddenly ceased.

"Paraffin lamp," announced the policeman on his return. "Said he hadn't turned it out before he went to bed."

"Um," I observed.

"We are going to keep a watch on 'im," concluded the constable, taking my name and address for his report.

The only person who does not seem to appreciate "Zepping" at its proper value is Mrs. Lewis, our charlady.

"Well, did you see the Zeppelins?" I said to her this morning.

"Saw all I wanted ter of 'em," she retorted grimly. "I was down in the washus as soon as I 'eard they was about"—then adding, with an ominous shake of the head: "They are after the Generation Station, that's what they are."



## SOME ADVANTAGES OF WAR

IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES,  
*Winter, 1915.*

It is an ill wind which blows nobody good; and although war is a very ill wind indeed, it certainly blows good to some. At the moment I do not refer to those armament firms, editors, journalists, and professional soldiers and sailors, who make a direct profit out of war. I do not even mean the farmers, who make an indirect profit therefrom, or the diplomatists, for whom war and its possibilities are a chief *raison d'être*. Nor do I allude to the incapable, the outcast, and the disreputable, to whom war comes as a blessed means of making a living, regaining a position, or retrieving a character. To all these classes war is of benefit, but it has also an advantage of a sort to confer upon the nation at large. These are not commensurable with the horrors and hardships it inflicts; but they are none the less real.

The incidental gains to the nation for which war is responsible may briefly be summed up as a broader distribution of wealth, an increase in employment, a development of initiative and capability of both sexes, an enlargement of social intercourse, a widening of the individual's horizon by travel and experience, an invigoration of society by interchange of population, a bracing up of the national physique, and a diminution of cant and humbug. All these ends could and should be otherwise attained, but at present they are not otherwise attained, and so war may justly claim that they be set down as some slight offset to her terrible account with humanity.

Though many pay heavily for the luxury of international slaughter, though generations yet unborn will still be footing the bill, it is a mistake to imagine that during a war penury is pronounced or widespread. On the contrary, a war brings about the distribution of wealth that would normally remain undistributed or less distributed. Enormous quantities of a certain class of goods are urgently needed. There is employment for almost all. Wages rise, so do taxes; but those who get the higher wages are not chiefly those who pay the higher taxes. It is true that this increased employment is abnormal and temporary, that higher prices pretty well swallow the higher wages, that a deplorable reaction must follow such unhealthy stimulation. But during the war things are not bad; unemployment figures swoop downwards, the labour world is well pleased, many are quite content that the war should go on. The situation is unsound, but for the moment it is satisfactory. The nation leads the life of a man who is sustained on oxygen, and the nation will suffer the same subsequent collapse.

A more real benefit due to the necessities of war is the development of the initiative and capability of the population. This will last and be turned to permanent good account. Men find themselves able to perform tasks they had never imagined within their powers; women undertake motor-driving, ticket-collecting, shell-making—a thousand “unwomanly” occupations. An embarrassment later, perhaps, to the labour market, but a valuable asset to the nation, all this increased ability. And the Government that brought it into being must see that, after the time of stress, it does not rot or lie neglected, but is turned to useful account.

The national health, there is no doubt, benefits by

war. That is to say, that part of the nation benefits in health which is left alive and unmutilated—an important qualification. (And even that part which does find its physique improved might reasonably claim that it should be able to insure its health without risking its life, and that killing is no essential ingredient in physical training.)

Perhaps the most valuable benefit incidentally conferred by war is of a social nature. Social life in England is normally stagnation qualified by hysteria. Among the upper classes it is bad enough; among the middle and lower classes it becomes almost a national disease. An existence of dull routine, passed in most cases among sombre or squalid surroundings, unable to find relief in good and healthy ways, flies to sordid vice or vulgar excitement, or in default sinks into a torpid and unaspiring lethargy. No doubt there are so-called “happy homes” (many of them, however, intellectual and emotional wastes, and only negatively “happy” by comparison with homes where positive misery reigns); no doubt there are numbers of courageous and cheerful souls fighting onward and upward amid difficulties and discouragements. But for the average working-class inhabitant of England to-day life is a round of grey monotony, broken into by cinemas, street adventures, and huddled holidays; a treadmill from which there is little respite; a close and cramped habitation, shut out from the sky and the winds and the fresh fields, and enlightened only by a tawdry glare and glitter.

That is the fate of the town worker, tolerable, surely, only because nothing better is known. The country worker, while nearer to Nature, is nearer also to the beasts, and loses intellectually what he gains physically.

For town or country man alike the main need has long been a widening of the horizon, actually and metaphorically. That widening of the horizon war has brought.

A great good, only to be fully measured by a succeeding generation, a good which partakes of a physical, mental, and moral nature, has been worked by what may be called the enormous circulation of population brought about by the war. The influence of travel, the effects of new social surroundings, of fresh friends, new outlooks, have regenerated and transformed a class whose danger and whose defect were alike narrowness. Men whose range of vision, with eyes and mind, was bounded by the neighbouring village or the next street have suddenly been granted a peep into a new world. Even if they have not seen strange lands and acquired the semblances of foreign expressions and novel oaths, they have found that all England itself is not modelled on the example of their birthplace. Little towns, plunged in a sleep of dull inertness, have been awakened therefrom by an incursion which first upset and then delighted them. They will never be the same again. Nor will the men who came.

Of course, the results of this strange and sudden shifting of population have been startling as well as salutary. The realities of life have predominated over the conventions, and Mrs. Grundy has sometimes shrieked her horror. But on the whole it has been all for the good, and an admirable excuse has been offered the British Public for dropping to a large extent that mantle of cant and hypocrisy which it wore with resignation and threw off with relief.

Realities prevailed. Young men and women found that conventions can certainly be dispensed with and

the world still go round. Mothers and fathers found that leading-strings suddenly snapped. Society began to realize that it was composed of live men and women, and not puppets. It was frightened at first; it awoke timidly; it acted apologetically: "Of course it's war-time." But it had learnt its lesson, and it will never unlearn it.



## LETTERS FROM THE SEA

“ O for a soft and gentle wind ! ”—A. CUNNINGHAM.

DEVONPORT,  
*February 11, 1916.*

WE have almost finished embarking. We got to the dock earlier than we were timed to, but everything went quite smoothly. Our boat is one of the “ City ” lines. She is just a bit over 6,000 tons, and is *fairly* steady (rolls a bit, I fancy). I am only second in command of the troops on board, as the nice old Colonel with whom I went out to Ypres has turned up. So I have to share a cabin, and who do you think is my cabin mate ? The M.O. ! I shall have to put a silencer on him if I’m to get any sleep on the voyage. We have quite a decent cabin, on the top cabin deck. It looks miles above the water, and it grieved and alarmed me to hear the steward say that the last officer who left the port open got “ washed out ” every night. *Some* rolling. We are not to mount any guns, after all, and have a special gun aft. This boat has been missed by a torpedo once already, and on the homeward voyage the other day chased a submarine.

I got no lunch, as well as no breakfast, to-day, as by the time I had got things going pretty well the others had eaten everything. The M.O. and the V.O. are now “ on leave ” as usual. They have begun early !

The authorities don’t appear to be going to get all

our vehicles on board, after all. It really is sickening; we are now in four parts: (1) Most of the vehicles, all the horses and all the men, and five officers, on this boat; (2) some vehicles left on the dock; (3) four officers and four men notified to follow later; (4) two officers and twenty men not yet notified to go at all. And they could have got the whole show nicely on to this boat.

Oh, we English! We? Most of the people one sees about this boat are Hindoos, except, of course, the officers. I believe one of them (Hindoos) made an excellent curry for lunch. But I only heard about it.

The men are sardined into the first deck down; the horses into the deck below, which ventilates upwards, which is nice for the men. The horses look very odd, all facing each other with their tails to the side of the ship, and tin mangers all along the gangway between them. Right down in the hold are the vehicles; they are still being slung in.

We sail, I believe, to-morrow morning, and take something like a fortnight getting to Alexandria, as this is a slow (12-knot) boat. I believe they once did 15 knots (with a submarine behind them).

Tyn-ton is still with us; but I understand that there is a risk of his being deftly done away with on arrival in Egypt! But we'll hope for the best, and if human cunning can save him it shall. My bicycle, also, has so far got along. It had a narrow squeak to-day; but I confused it with the Battery bicycles, and no one counted them. Harrow, my ever-ingenuous servant, has fitted in my mass of baggage somewhere; but I fear I shall be sick over a good deal of it. On the whole, I think "trying it on" in the matter of baggage does pay. But it's early to speak yet. Well, that's all for the present.



SOMEWHERE OFF CAPE FINISTERRE,  
*February 14, 1916.*

I am writing this in a sheltered nook on the deck, just under the bridge, which is reserved for officers. In the woodwork just behind me is a small hole where a bullet from some Turkish rifle came and wounded the O.C. troops at the time of one of the Gallipoli landings. Above me, the woodwork of the bridge itself has been ripped up by a fragment of shrapnel from a submarine. Little reminders, these, that we are not on a pleasure trip. And there are others. All the men who are to be seen lying about basking in the sunshine wear life-belts. Away aft there is a small crowd round the 4·7 we carry (we fired two practice rounds this morning; it has only just been mounted, and never hitherto fired). Sentries with rifles stand by every boat.

All around is a waste of sea. There is something almost eerie, certainly awe-inspiring, in the tremendous unbroken circle of horizon which surrounds a ship out of sight of land. And there is something which approaches the horrible in the ceaseless monotony of the huge slopes and mounds of water which roll out of the distance, surge under the keel of the heaving boat, and shoulder away into the distance again. Wave after wave, wave after wave, all the same, all water, aimlessly moving. It exasperates, it haunts, it gets on the nerves; there's no sense in it! And yet it soothes, too, if the mind is surrendered to the spell. The soft, ever-recurring *sush-sush* of the parting waves, the swish of the water as the boat lies over on it and sends it rushing away, the unending sway to and fro of the boat itself—they all mesmerize and overcome thought, until action is abhorrent, and to lie and dream the only possibility.

Maybe, a little later, there may come a sharp awakening from such dreaming.

To tell the truth, although I write so detachedly about the sea, I am not yet feeling at all as though I could contemplate it merely as the subject of an essay. My relations with it have been far from harmonious. This is now the third day out, and I have not eaten a real meal since Devonport. *Au contraire*, as the Frenchman remarked. Indeed, it has not been a bit pleasant. All the time there has been a persistent and pretty powerful swell, which has upset most people. The M.O., my cabin mate, has been damnably well, and *will* talk about food, and smoke cigarettes in his bunk. True, he has atoned by popping out from his curry or Irish stew to bring me a dry (very dry) biscuit, the limit of my efforts till last night, when I imbibed soup. But it isn't gentlemanly.

The V.O., who, if you remember, was nearly seasick when being taken over the *Halcyon* in Yarmouth Harbour, has been the wonder of the day. Whether it was a patent remedy or whether he stands Atlantics better than harbours I don't know; but he has never missed a meal or shunned a smoke. No one has been more surprised than himself. He is quite apologetic about it. But he doesn't like the fauna of the ship. He declares he saw a crocodile crawling up the wall of his cabin. We reassure him by pointing out that it was a cockroach; but he sticks to his crocodile. We have compromised on a crocodoach. Talking of fauna, we have on board the Column goat (which survives everything with the utmost placidity), a collie, a monkey (belonging to the Welshmen), and Tyn-ton, who takes his meals regularly, and is as regularly sick afterwards. He agrees with me about the sea. I think most of us agree

with each other about it. One exasperated officer, who was trying to "get up" during an extra bad fit of rolling, looked out of his porthole at last, and cried weakly: "Keep still, you damned thing! won't you." The M.O. has turned out better than I expected. A brilliant idea struck me that I might use my "ear-defenders" if he got very bad; but they haven't proved necessary. Indeed, he has not yet waked me with his snoring. (But my alarm-watch didn't wake me, either.) It is getting cold on deck, so I'll go in and leave this for the present.

SOMEWHERE OFF THE COAST OF PORTUGAL,  
*February 15, 1916.*

We move sedately on in the midst of a great blue plate of rippling water. The sun plays down with a warmth which begins to be of the South. Long slow-moving mounds of water, a hundred yards apart and as high as a good sandhill, come inexorably after us, overtake us, and pass on ahead. A cloud of gulls hovers incessantly over the stern and in our wake. The sky is blue above, with an edge of faint clouds round the far circle of the horizon. There is just a gentle breeze, warm and mellow. A soft tranquillity pervades everything, and we should be thoroughly complacent were it not for the lurking, drone-like thought which cannot help but lie at the bottom of every mind. For it is an unpleasant fact that the better the weather is for us the better it also is for the submarine. Up in a sort of crow's-nest a native is always watching. A ship's officer, too, on the bridge has his eyes skinned. Various military persons, officers and others, are also supposed to be assisting in spotting any twinkle or ripple of a periscope. But I am told that it is practically unheard

of for a stationary submerged submarine to be detected. There is only a shaft like a walking stick, perhaps the momentary glitter of the sun on metal (it might be a wave), and then, when you have gone well by the waiting monster (so that you cannot ram her), the quick rush of a torpedo going fifty miles an hour, thirty seconds suspense, and then—down in four minutes (average). The hole in the ship's hull is about 20 by 30 feet, I hear.

That is when they wait for you; they see you afar off, and unostentatiously creep to a point near which you will pass. When you sink, there is really no time for boats (and even if there were, we have only boats for one-third of our crew and passengers). So, unless some boat is in sight—that's all. And, supposing there be a boat in sight, maybe they will have to consider the risk to their own safety in coming to pick you up. So it can scarcely be wondered at if that uncomfortable uncertainty prowls about at the back of everyone's mind, even on such a sunny day as this.

I wouldn't write like this if I did not know that by the time ("if and when," in fact) you get this we all shall be past the danger. And if you don't get it—well, then it doesn't matter, either.

Just here there came an interval for the purposes (1) of seeing two rounds fired from the R.H.A. field guns, which, after all, are to be tried; (2) of being vaccinated and inoculated against cholera and dysentery. This, with the previous inoculations against typhoid, completes my quota of germs. I hope that all will be well inside me after this last mixed bag, and that they will get on together. The men are a bit timid about germing up, and I think it did good for me to get punctured publicly.

The field-gun shooting was not an inspiring success. Owing to the absence of facilities for quickly elevating and depressing and following the target as the ship rolls, and owing also to the narrow limits of traverse right and left (4 degrees each way), it is only possible to get a shot off by waiting patiently until the boat is kind enough to roll and swing precisely right, when the gun is forthwith fired by the layer. Even this slow method is not accurate, and field-gun shooting from a ship cannot be pronounced effective. I think I could make it more so by rigging up a pulley arrangement for the trail, and, perhaps, some rope arrangement for bodily elevating the gun and carriage together; but they are not my guns, and I cannot interfere.

Spain and Portugal! Quite close! How little free one really is! I have always wanted to go to Spain, and, however near we may go, I am dragged along by a relentless machine of fate which I can no more withstand than I can death when it comes. Over there to the east sunny lands are smiling, peace is waiting, adventure is calling; and on I must go. No, one is not free—one is never free. But one can make a lot of use of what comes one's way, and that, perhaps, is as good as, or better than, freedom. And maybe happiness, to a very great extent, may consist as much in liking what one gets as in getting what one likes. Within limits, of course; within limits! The truth seems to be that life as a whole—living successfully—is a nice combination of taking one's chances, creating one's chances, and making the best of things. But one cannot get away from the fact that, as Samuel Butler somewhere says, life is eight parts cards and two parts play.

One of our horses died in the night, and was thrown overboard this morning. Poor devil! he must have

suffered a bit. Lucky if we don't lose more than half a dozen, I think, on this voyage. Tyn-ton ate heartily this morning, *and wasn't sick after it*. He also ate through his breast harness, and was found careering untrammelled about the deck. He takes things as they come, and enjoys life on the whole, does Tyn-ton.

Of course, one isn't always thinking of submarines. To do so would be foolish, if not cowardly. But the shadow of them is there, as the shadow of a piece of bad news is there through the light and shade of everyday life, as the shadow of an unremembered calamity is there when one wakes from sleep. One must always be prepared; one's soul remembers if one's mind forgets. Still, one gets on very well, and eats, drinks, and is merry.

IN THE ATLANTIC,

February 16, 1916.

To-day is quite different from yesterday, but equally desirable. There is the same circle of horizon, the same fringe of pale mauvish clouds around it, the same sparse scattering of solitary cloudlets overhead, the same blaze of glorious sun. But to-day the sea itself, instead of being sleek and almost oily with ridge after ridge of weltering water, is flecked with white horses and chopped into frisking wavelets. The wind is almost due astern, and so we do not feel it much; but it brightens and enlivens the scene. The air gets continually warmer; the sun always more potent. This afternoon I cannot sit in it comfortably without a hat. One begins to picture what Madeira must be like, and to want to go straight on and see.

Every day we get the wireless summary of news—quite a budget, about half a column of *The Times*, I

should think. To-day we hear the *Arethusa* is gone. I wonder if that catastrophe has anything to do with the German tale of a cruiser they sank a day or two ago? Of course, although we "take" everything in the wireless line that comes along, we cannot "send" at all. That would give away our position.

By the way, our ship's officers are very nervous of sailing ships. I could not make out why until I heard that submarines very frequently rig up a mast and sails!

This morning I got together a game. It is a kind of "shuffle-board," and the recipe is as follows:

Borrow a piece of chalk from the quartermaster (he has *everything*). Chalk out a diagram something like this, on the boards of the upper deck:

6	4	6
5	2	5
6	3	6

The diagram is entirely according to taste, and this particular species was evolved out of my own uninformed mind. Since then I hear that this is the proper kind:

+ 10		
4	3	8
9	5	1
2	7	6
- 10		

(You notice that this adds up to 15 downward, cross-ways, and diagonally; but that has nothing to do with

it.) Then you go to the canteen (if open), and buy four small tins of sardines. Lastly you procure a thick stick of some kind, about 4 feet long, and chalk a line on the deck 6 yards or more from your diagram.

To play the game (my way; I don't know any other), choose two sides of two persons each. Then, standing behind the chalk line, let each player in turn try to project his sardine tin on to the diagram, using the end of the stick to push it with. Each side plays a player in turn, as in curling, and, also as in curling, it may be necessary to knock an opponent out of a "good" square.

The sardine tins "carry" very well across the deck. I don't know whether it improves the sardines. One side plays with sardine tins label upwards ("spot"), the other with sardine tins bottom upwards ("plain"). The V.O. and I beat two of the others by the odd game in a fine rubber of three games of 50 up. The M.O. lost his nerve at the close finish, and sardined short three times running.

Better than nothing!

Now I'm going to try and learn a little Arabic. (Talking of Arabic, we have the most catholic assortment of dialects aboard. There are the ship's officers—Scotch (Glasgow): why are ships' officers, especially skippers, always Scotch? Then there are the other R.H.A. Battery—Highland; our own Battery—Midland; and the details of an Infantry Division (Transport)—Welsh: oh, so Welsh! To hear one of the Division Transport arguing as to whether he should be inoculated against cholera or not is a "concord of sweet sounds" worth hearing. The Colonel asked me whether "that was Welsh." Of course it wasn't; but it wasn't English.)



*General Report.*

Microbes—steady, and friendly among themselves.

Arm—swollen, but happy.

Dirty weather to come from the vaccination quarter.

Tyn-ton—less sick than usual.

Submarines— (?)

HEADING FOR GIBRALTAR,

*February 17, 1916.*

This horse business is becoming very serious. It is septic pneumonia, and there is no disease more deadly or more contagious. Already we have thrown three overboard, and there are quite a number of cases sickening. Poor Billy, my first charger, is in the clutches of the thing; his temperature was 106° this morning. It is very distressing even to witness: the horse becomes dull and sluggish, droops his head till it rests on the bar of his stall; then develops fever and refuses food; lastly breathes with more and more difficulty, till at last he collapses and dies. It is swift, too, this stroke; for from first to last it may be only a day and a half from a well horse to a carcass floating astern. Alas! I am afraid we have the worst to come. They will not assure me, too, that septic pneumonia in horses is not contagious to human beings. But, thank goodness! there are no signs that it is as yet.

Yesterday evening we had a fine commotion. Late in the afternoon, a little before dark, a steamer hove in sight on the port bow. That in itself need have caused no stir; we pass an occasional friendly or neutral outward or homeward bound. But this steamer was heading for us. Now, the orders are, if a steamer heads for you, to turn and go about on another tack, and see if she follows you. You do not feel inclined to be

sociable these days, and sea-room is better than sea-company with *Moewes* and submarines about. At first we kept our course. But the skipper wasn't easy. At last, as he was pacing the deck, he asked me, as I was looking at the stranger through my glasses, how she was heading. "Straight for us," said I. The skipper skipped up the companion-way on to the bridge, and we immediately began to execute the most unusual manœuvres. Within a few minutes we were heading back home again. By now everyone was watching the steadily approaching steamer and hazarding conjectures of all kinds. A little group of officers armed with field-glasses stood on the bridge deck (as I find it is called), glaring at her. She was about four or five miles away, and seemed still to be coming dead for us. Suddenly one of us turned round. There, a little in rear of our group, stood the V.O.—a V.O. of strange and distended proportions, of fiery visage and stertorous breath. We all gazed spellbound. Then someone hit him where his ribs should have been—and bounced back as from an indiarubber ball. "You damned old fool! you've blown yourself up," he said, and we all howled with delight. The V.O. seemed quite indignant, and refused to be cowed. But he did keep explaining during the rest of the evening that it was "a jolly good rehearsal."

This morning we have got into the really critical zone, and we shall remain in it henceforward. The Colonel had us all up this morning, and issued our orders in case of (1) being torpedoed, (2) being shelled. In either case he and I are to go to the bridge deck; his Captain is to preside over the two field guns, which the other R.H.A. are to man; one of my Captains is to take charge of the troops aft, and my Adjutant of

the troops forward. The two subalterns, of the Welsh contingent, are to be busy on the big boat deck "and assist," as the handbook to the gun has it. The doctors and our V.O. are to wait at the dispensary and receive any wounded there. We are to provide reserve detachments for the field guns and for the naval gun in case the naval gunners get hit. Also we provide six signallers: two forward, two on the bridge deck, and two aft. I am having a telephone laid to connect these points. In case we are shelled, the men are, as far as possible, to keep under cover in the well decks. If we are torpedoed, the men merely fall in on their ordinary decks, and wait for the ship to go down, while the ship's crew try to lower the boats and rafts, the men helping to lower the rafts.

I am supplementing these orders with others to Harrow, my servant, to try (if he can do it without danger) to heave my two wooden boxes of provisions overboard, and to bring Tyn-ton to me.

IN SIGHT OF GIBRALTAR,

9 p.m., *February 17, 1916.*

"Reel mook agen, thank God!"

Exclamation of one of the Leicestershire R.H.A. on being assured that what he saw was land. As a matter of fact it was Cape Spartel, in Morocco, and in a little it became a dream of beauty. All the sunny afternoon the grey unsubstantial shadow grew nearer and more solid, but not less fairy-like. A single white building (a lighthouse, lonely and lovely) stood out against a background of delicately shaded mountains, which retreated into a towering wall of pinkish-grey peaks. Great battlements of rock, these, and around them all

the glamour of romance and the East. Morocco ! Tangier ! It was all just as it should be. Blue, violet-blue waters, rippled by a warm breeze ; and there, beyond the waters, mysterious, haze-covered, wonderful, the mountains of the East. The sun set in a blaze of crimson glory, dropped down into the sea astern and was gone. In the sky there remained a riot of colour, from crimson, over the darkening sea, to the faintest greenish-blue in the higher heavens. And still the wonderland ahead basked in a misty radiance, till gradually it lost depth and colour and became a soft shadowy wall of night. Then the moon came into her kingdom and strowed a broad path of silver before us, a silver path leading straight into the distance where the ink-black mountains of Spain almost met the ink-black mountains of Africa, and left between them the way into the Mediterranean.

Down the path we went, till the beacon of Spartel fell astern, the lights of Tangier faded, the revolving flash of Trafalgar was lost, and the tiers of twinkling pin-points which meant Gibraltar rose out of the sea ahead. There, faintly outlined in the moonlight, was the huge mass of the Rock, and over against it on the African side the crowded brilliance of Ceuta, nestling under the splendid heights of the Sierra Bullones, which the sailors know as the Mount of Apes. A winking destroyer impertinently accosted us from the fairway, and put a string of questions to us as we passed. From the Rock itself came swift invisible messages as to our course. And so, under the beauty of God and between the portals of Nature, we little beings passed on to our task—to slay and be slain.

Lord ! Lord ! oh, Lord ! Lord ! what fools we mortals be !

I am going, despite the jeers of many, to sleep on deck to-night. So is one of our Captains. If only they would keep the ship straight, and the wind would give a guarantee that it would blow from the same quarter for more than ten consecutive minutes, I should be more confident of a fairly comfortable night. As it is—well, I hope.

This morning I suffered much from swabbing. It is the curse of seafaring. On deck one gets swabbed off it. Off the deck they swab on to one. This morning while reflecting, in my bath, how uncomfortable it would be to be torpedoed at the moment, in which case the ship would heel over and one would have to climb up to the door, there came a rushing sound, and about 2 gallons of filthy water poured in through the porthole and entirely vitiated my towel. So I had to squeeze the worst wet off me and dress undried. Then, looking out of the bathroom door, I was met by torrents of water pouring off the upper deck. I waited no less than five minutes, wetly and scantily clad, to let the shower pass; and then had almost to wade to get home and dress.

Gott strafe swabbing!

By the way, all ports are, of course, blacked over. I wonder when the black will be removed. It will be a joyful task for someone, I know.

On going through my library this morning, and selecting "Eothen" to read, I found that, unfortunately, "Cromwell's Letters" has come instead of it. They have a close facial resemblance, and I would not grumble at all but that it is the third volume of the Letters, and I hate beginning at the third volume of anything. Still, it isn't worth sending out the first two volumes. But my "Eothen" might try the journey. Also the "Everyman" volume of Byron which con-

tains "Don Juan" (it's the second, I think). "Don Juan" is so comforting.

I send you a menu of our dinner to-night, by which you may see we do well. How on earth is it that doing nothing gives one such an appetite?

"And so to (my much derided) bed."

### M E N U .

#### DINNER.

Consommé Chilian		
Ling Fish Cakes.		
Beef Olives.		
Braised Duck, Onion Sauce.		
Potatoes.		Vegetables.
	Plum Pudding.	
Cheese.		Dessert.
	Coffee.	

OFF THE SOUTH COAST OF SPAIN,  
*February 18, 1916.*

I suppose we are the most dolt-headed nation on God's earth. That is bad enough, but better things might be hoped for if we were not actually proud of it. "Muddle through" is the British motto, and should be emblazoned on the nation's coat of arms. (What fun it would be to work out that coat of arms!) And yet our easy-going casualness persists; "our natural phlegm carries us through," as no doubt those in authority (in Whitehall) would say.

No set of men could, I think, on the whole be better behaved and more temperate than those on this ship. But we carry drink, it is available, and men could get drunk if they liked. Some few are getting to lurk about the bar and take short drinks. Why cannot we say: "You are going through peril to peril; you want every faculty clear and every muscle fit. No drink! You'll

be better for it, and it may teach you to do without it. If it does, you'll find the East a healthier and happier place." Of course, if we had the courage, like Russia, to deal boldly with the whole drink question, it would be better. But, equally of course, we (*i.e.*, legislators susceptible to vote-catching influences) would never have the courage to do that. (I remember that the thing which really brought down the house at the Norwich Hippodrome was the assertion that we could forgive the Kaiser anything but the closing of the pubs.) However, we could, at least, easily do this little stroke of good work—but we don't.

The sun is stoking up. I must get my faithful Harrow to drag forth my thinner underwear from its hiding-places. Last night on deck was perfect; I slept sound and rose refreshed, in spite of the mournful prophecies of the skipper, who solemnly assured me that it was madness to sleep in the moonlight, that it would blind me, if by chance my eyes opened a little, and in any case would give me a stiff neck. The moonlight flooded me all night, and I'm not blind or stiff-necked. Why should I be? The moon has no light of her own. We only *see* her there in the sky, as we should see anything else hung in the sunlight. "It's all moonshine!"

As we were zigzagging about this morning to dodge the ever-possible submarine, and as I was walking the deck with the skipper and commenting on the beauty of the snow-capped peaks of Sierra Nevada on our port quarter, suddenly I found I was alone. The skipper had incontinently vanished to the bridge. Returning, he explained. "Saw a whale spout; and it's just the splash that the compressed air makes when a torpedo comes up after it's been discharged." But it *was* a whale this time.

JUST PAST GALITA ISLAND,

*February 20, 1916.*

There is one other possible method of minimizing the risk of being caught by a submarine, which I might have added to those I mentioned the other day. The way a submarine first catches sight of a steamer is by a cloud of smoke on the horizon. If it were not for this cloud of smoke many a boat might escape notice which now gets chased or caught outright. Now, in Leicester they have a very strict by-law regarding smoking chimneys. Anyone allowing a factory chimney to smoke for longer than, I think, five minutes gets fined, and there are special watchmen to see that the law is enforced. Surely, what is possible on land in this matter is possible on sea, and steamers could be fitted with smoke-consuming apparatus? I asked one of the ship's officers whether it would not be possible, and he said he thought it would, "and," he added, "we may see it done about the year 1920, after the war is over." He emphasized the danger incurred by the smoke trail at present emitted.

I think I forgot, too, to include, in the catalogue of livestock on board, a charming little kitten belonging to the captain of the ship. He is a little black imp, born on board at Salonika, and was called Sally until our V.O. called attention to his sex, which had been miscalculated, after which he has had to be Nika.

The horses die with persistent regularity. We have lost eight, but I think the worst is over. Billy, my charger, is much better, I'm glad to say, but the Adjutant has lost one of his chargers.



*Later on the same day.*

Our Welshmen have just been singing. I am always a bit afraid of making a fool of myself when I hear Welshmen sing, and more so than ever when it is far from home. To-day it was quite something of a struggle not to. After luncheon the Welsh singers mustered in the fore part of the ship, just under the bridge deck. We officers hung over the bridge and listened. The rest of the ship's company who wanted to hear thronged round underneath. It was a glorious sunny afternoon, a stiff breeze—half a gale—blowing from astern; great blue seas crested with white manes tearing past, the ship heaving and riding over them like a water-bird. The Welshmen sat in a little group in the sunshine, the sergeant who was conducting them in their midst. For a moment there was silence while they watched him. Then he motioned with his hand, and there arose the wailing minor strains of "Aberystwith." It was a strange effect, that little group of men out on the sea, far from home, singing the music of their native land with those wonderful rich voices that are their natural right. I heard song after song full of the mournful beauty of my lovely land, and, despite myself, my eyes filled with tears. How many of those men in a little while would sing no more, would see no more the land of which they sang? Oh, war is folly, insensate, cruel folly, and if there be a God anywhere He must weep these days. One touch from an engine of man, and all those breathing beings, capable of beauty, full of the power to enjoy, are useless carrion drifting with the tides. One would call any God to turn in vengeance on those who would do such a deed. And yet no; for they but do their bidding, like ourselves. On those, then,

that bid them do it? Yet no again; for maybe they "know not what they do." The truth is there is no vengeance but remorse; all else is idle and wrong. To be wise, and to make wisdom plain—that is the true victory and the real vengeance.

For the last two days we have been coasting along Algeria, catching a dim sight of tall snow-capped peaks, basking in the semi-Oriental sunlight, watching always for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. The men have their daily parade; after that, except for the look-out men and certain gun squads, they lie in the sun, play cards, or read. There is a mysterious game (obviously of chance, because dice enter into it) called "Crown and Anchor," over which an ancient bombardier of ours, the hero, plainly, of many a voyage, presides, with pleasure and profit, no doubt, to himself. The canteen is occasionally open, and the men indulge in vast hatfuls of sweets and ginger biscuits, jars of pickles, and bottles of "minerals."

I don't wonder they are sometimes seasick.

We officers have not much to do. Of course, we go now and then (like the men) to stables; but there is plenty of time to idle in. I fill up mine by writing, reading, getting a little preliminary instruction in Arabic from one of our sergeants, and playing various "bumble-puppy" games. I laid out a little nine-hole golf-links on the bridge deck the other day. Some might say the game had a suspicious resemblance to the extemporized shuffle-board, since it was based on sardine tins, chalk, and a piece of stick. But in reality there was all the world of difference. Starting from the covered passage back of the captain's cabin, the first hole lay diagonally across the deck to the extreme outer corner thereof. It was a plain, straightforward hole without bunkers,

aving the foot of the steps up to the bridge, which would catch a sliced drive. Seizing the club (the before-mentioned piece of wood), the player had only to drive his ball (sardine tin) boldly down the course, and he could be on the green in one. Holing out was a matter of some difficulty, as the sardine tin—I beg pardon, the ball—had completely to cover the hole (a round chalk mark about an inch in diameter). The second hole was of a very sporting character. It was only 2 feet long, but 1 foot from the tee a hideous bunker yawned. In fact, the ball had to be driven between two posts almost exactly a sardine tin's width apart. Canny players could make a dog's leg hole of it; but the true sportsman went for the narrows (bogey 2; par 1). No. 3 was a simple hole, to the top of the companion-way up from the main deck; but if you went down the steps you lost the hole. The tee-shot No. 4 was from a long drive of nearly 5 yards to clear a small mushroom-shaped bunker of iron, when the hole lay nicely opened up, a foot away. The fifth hole deserves special description. Between the front of the chart-house and the fore railings of the bridge deck is a gangway about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide, diversified by another mushroom bunker. At the other (starboard) side of the deck, thus approached, are two pillars supporting the bridge, about a sardine tin's breadth from the railings. Behind these two pillars nestled the fifth hole. A strong drive down the gangway, from the port to the starboard deck, unless it hit the mushroom or got entangled with the railing posts, would bring you nearly up to the first pillar. The lies were sometimes rather difficult here, as the ball would often get tilted up against the side of the chart-house, in which case a real blow instead of a shove would have to be taken, incurring some risk of the sardines breaking out. How-

ever, if all went well, your second would either (1) go between the pillars and the railings and lie near the hole, (2) get in amongst the pillars, (3) get in amongst the railings, or (4), if you were a coward, sail out well into the port deck and open up the hole. Holing out followed as usual. Six was a simple little hole, with only the risk of going overboard. Seven was a dog's-leg, with a clever sloping drive round the apparatus on which the boats sit when in harbour (don't know its name). The eighth was a curly hole, with the chance for a true sportsman to get through some more narrows. And the last hole was all round both decks and through the gangway between (bogey 10). Although I invented the game, I was invariably beaten at it.

At deck quoits Wales played the World yesterday. After an exciting tie the replay was won by Wales (team: two infantry subalterns and self). The M.O. captained the World, and put the team off by adverse comments on their methods. The M.O.'s voice being something between the noise made by a hand-saw and that of a locomotive letting off steam, we begged him to be quiet, as there might be a submarine about. Anyhow, Wales won. (Net profit, 6d. per head to the Welsh team.)

Last night the sea and wind got up, and a tremendous swell started. I feared the worst for some time, but eventually swallowed my feelings and went in boldly to dinner, with satisfactory results. Later I was tipped out of my bunk when asleep, but fell on my feet. Much surprise. This morning the swell continued, and some of our men were sick. Luckily, the sea comes from nearly astern.

SOMEWHERE SOUTH OF THE ADRIATIC,  
*February 22, 1916.*

The days wear slowly on, and our goal draws nearer; but there is a superstitious sort of reluctance to talk of "getting there" or to make plans or discuss action after arrival, lest—— But the men are beginning to write letters, which means the appointment, shortly, of a ship's censor. Rather an unenviable job; it means wading through seas of harmless commonplace to find one drop of poison. And one gets so tired of "Hoping this finds you in the pink, as it leaves me at present."

Yesterday we passed Malta. Just at breakfast time (8.30 a.m.) the island of Gozo was sighted. I could not see it with the naked eye, it was so nearly sunwards, but with blue glasses I could easily make out the irregular line of cliffs. By eleven or so we were coasting along the shore, half a dozen miles out. With our field-glasses we could see all the features and incidents ashore—roads; houses; tiers of fields surrounded with stone walls, looking much like a scene on an Italian lake, with the vineyards climbing the hills; great camps; barracks; old forts; churches, and then the streets (Italian, semi-Oriental, flanked with flat-roofed houses, white and glaring in the sun) of Valetta. Really quite attractive, especially after eight days at sea. But one missed something. Suddenly it came to me: there were no trees. The whole island, so far as we could see it, was a treeless waste, lying scorching barrenly in the sun. There may possibly be trees elsewhere, or there may be some reason why trees should not or could not grow on Malta; but I think that, unless this be so, if I presided over Malta, I would make it an ambition of my presidency to clothe the place in trees and leave it a green

oasis in the desert of seas, instead of a stark and comfortless rock. We all agreed we didn't want to be dumped at Malta.

Tyn-ton is rapidly becoming an old sea-dog. He has entirely ceased being sick, and is under the impression that he runs the ship. He was washed yesterday, which filled him with annoyance, but was for our mutual good. He says he likes the sea after all.

NEARLY SOUTH OF CRETE,

*Evening, February 22, 1916.*

Almost all to-day we have been steaming along in the comforting vicinity of warships. Of course, they couldn't stop our being torpedoed, but if we floated they would probably be in time to pick us up before we perished of what, I believe, is technically known as "exposure." I learnt another little trick of the submarine this morning. He likes to spot a vessel at night, in the moonlight, when she cannot see him, and then to dog her footsteps, if I may say so, till near dawn. Just before it gets light the submarine steals ahead, and when the darkness disappears, and it becomes possible to get a shot, he is snugly waiting with his periscope out. After that—people in the water. Also he can *hear* the screw of a boat several miles away through the water. They seem to know most of the tricks of the submarine trade on board this boat. They ought to, for they have, I think, been shelled or chased on practically every voyage. Last voyage they were chased for half an hour just here.

I have spent an unhappy afternoon censoring letters. Every man in the Battery seems to have written at least two already, and as soon as we empty the sack I

have put up under the legend "*L.R.H.A. Postbag. Do not seal envelopes,*" it seems to fill again. As the men will, plainly, have nothing much to do except wait to be torpedoed and write about it, between now and reaching Alexandria, this widow's-cruse-like property of the postbag is likely to continue. If so, it will involve the constant employment of a staff of censors consisting of all the Battery officers aboard.

The men, except one or two more advanced correspondents, do not show marked originality in their epistles. References to "the pink," "fags," "sea-sickness," "the grub," Malta, Gibraltar, and the Mediterranean (spelt variously), sum up the usual letter. Occasionally a more enterprising individual describes the scenery, the delay in reaching Gibraltar, or a fight with German submarines (promptly censored: not because it is not true—the censor is no stickler for veracity—but because it deals with "military or naval intelligence"). One aggrieved sufferer had been "inculcated" against "colera," and another described how many horses "had died of sceptic pneumonia." Some letters were obviously written at the censor, and one writer explained: "I cannot right much, as the Commanding Officer is going to censor this." A few letters are quite excellent, and their authors do not need to draw on their imagination to sustain the interest. Letters to young ladies these are, mostly. And in nearly all there comes the reassuring sentence: "If you get this I shall be safe and sound." Several, indeed, go farther, and boldly say: "We have landed all right after a pretty good voyage" or "a dull time," according to the taste of the writer. Confident folk these! But, oh! it would be too cruel at this point to disappoint so blackly those who are waiting for these letters.

And yet—War and Nature know no mercy. Nor does Fate.

*February 25, 1916.*

We are in at last.

At a little after nine o'clock yesterday night there came a glare on the eastern horizon. Presently a light rose from the waves, just as the sun rises, and in a little stood clear above the horizon. The Pharos of Alexandria. A winking patrol boat on our port now greeted us, lit up its lights for a moment or two while it passed us a message, and faded into the night. The air was serene and soft, the sea almost without a ripple. We steamed steadily on, but there was no haste, as the rules of the port preclude entering after dark. This is all very well for those inside, but a little trying for those who have to cruise around all night in an area exposed to submarines. One would have thought that some device—a sort of lock—could have been contrived whereby a boat could ride into its well-earned safety at any time.

We all watched the lights of Alexandria come out in twinkling lines, and then went to bed. I got up early next morning (about five), and saw the sun rise over the city. The East at last! Low sandy ridges, flat-roofed houses, and strange feathery trees, all under an Oriental sunrise. We were still slowly circling round, so as to keep moving and thus lessen the risk of a torpedo. Soon the pilot came aboard, an imposing Egyptian with a heavy moustache and a fez. By seven we were moving delicately among the crowded craft in the harbour—the “Eunostos” harbour of old, the port of safe return.

And so our journey is brought to happy conclusion



for all, save for the fifteen poor horses who have gone overboard. Indeed, we could have wanted no more favourable voyage; and one of the things I shall not forgive the War is, having tainted the delight of a fortnight which Nature did her best to make happy. For it must spoil things if the more placid the natural conditions the more unfavourable the military and naval. And no one who has made such a voyage will, I think, deny that under constant anxiety no enjoyment can be perfect.

Still—not so bad !



## EGYPT

### THE RUE DE LA PORTE DE ROSETTE

“ Olla podrida.”

March 5, 1916.

THE Rue de la Porte de Rosette !

Traffic of the East and of the West; smart motors, native *gharries* (properly *arabayyahs*), with two horses or one horse, antique-looking private buses, crowd down the asphalt roadway (down the right-hand side, which is confusing for the English-bred). Farther out, where the Rue de la Porte de Rosette merges into the Aboukir Road, there appear strange high-wheeled carts, each like a thin box slung between two of those first old perched-up “ spider ” bicycles, and long attenuated lorries, resembling those on which logs are hauled.

And the wayfarers ! In the motors, rich merchants and stately Egyptian officials in red fezes; in the *arabayyahs*, anything, from an Australian trooper lolling at ease to a piled-up collection from a high-class harem, consisting of, say, three heavily veiled ladies with wonderful eyes (but probably less wonderful other features) and peculiar wooden nose cylinders peeping under the black draperies which shroud their beauty (or the reverse) from prying and sacrilegious eyes, and with them an assorted load of infants, black but comely. The private buses usually contain persons on business, maybe a bevy of nurses or a swarm of school-children proceeding to or from a convent. Loads of stone or

other material are piled on the spider-wheeled vehicles, whose structural peculiarity is caused by their having to deal with tracts of Nile mud in which ordinary carts would sink above the axle; while, crowded down the elongated lorries, sitting back to back, like people on those primitive horse buses one sees in old pictures in *Punch*, are more veiled beauties of the Orient, resembling bales of cloth going to the warehouse.

The Rue de la Porte de Rosette! From it is derived the chief impression of a first drive through Alexandria. It is not the principal thoroughfare (that is the Rue de Ramleh); it is not the principal business street (that is the Rue Sherif Pacha); but it is the most comprehensive and typical. In it is the Mohammed Ali Club, in the shaded veranda of which officers and well-fed residents sit in basket chairs and watch the kaleidoscopic passing show. In it are all manner of shops, and, later, majestic private houses and public buildings. In it, too, are the Savoy Palace Hotel, the Rosette Dancing Palace, and the Rink. Last of all it runs through the spacious gardens and out into the suburbs, and you may see the avenues and natives of the country-side.

It is, indeed, a happy combination of Berlin's Dorotheenstrasse, Wilhelmstrasse, and the Thiergarten, with a street in Montreal or New York, and the Grand Trunk Road of India.

But it is the East, above all, and the Eastern sun blazes and scorches down day after dazzling day. White houses, white roads, blue skies, fierce sunlight, brown arid earth, twinkling blue sea, flecked here and there with tiny white sails; a medley of blacks, browns, reds, whites, and an infinite minor variety of colours, in the dresses of the natives—that is Alexandria.

We arrived happily, if with hard work. The boat got

in from the outer sea soon after daybreak, and into the actual disembarkation berth after a few hours' anchoring in the harbour, where we all gazed with excited interest on the new scenes that began to unfold before us. Dapper Egyptian officers; a pilot who looked as if he had walked out of the "Arabian Nights," and might murder anyone at any moment; white and green hospital ships, like graceful birds at rest on the placid water; swarms of coaling coolies; strange rakish sailing craft steered by patriarchal Arabs; and later, as we came alongside the quay, the usual *olla podrida* of small boys and riff-raff.

There was delay in getting out our miserable horses; ten were so ill that they had to go straight to hospital. All through the unaccustomed heat we worked, till everything but the guns and vehicles was off the ship. These were to be left under a guard till next day; the horses and men were to go on at once. At 2 p.m. I sent on an advance party of about twenty under the M.O. (whose feet have been sore ever since, although he walked only three miles); and a little later Harrow, Tyn-ton, and my luggage, proceeded by *arabayyah* with bicycle (unauthorized) escort. The horses started about 4.30 under the Adjutant, and, after seeing them off, the V.O. and I took a lift in a campward-going motor-lorry. The Ammunition Column Captain was left with the guard over the guns, etc.

It was nearly dark when the V.O. and I reached Zaharieh Camp, after a picturesque drive through Alexandria. It was the finish of a typical Egyptian day; the coolness came down like a breath from heaven; we all revelled in it after the roasting of the last hours. It was good to get back to the East—to see the Eastern sights, and even to smell the Eastern smells. I felt

full of a buoyant vitality. All things looked splendid to me. I felt the greatness and richness of the world. I called myself proud to be in some small way of its citizenship. I could have sung for joy; I could even smile at some of the flamboyant professional ladies who "take the air" in such quantities in the cool of evening, rattling along in their *arabayyahs*; but the smile was one of joy, and not of pleasure.

It was quite dark (9 p.m. to be precise) when the Adjutant and the horses arrived. They tumbled and blundered into the sandiness of camp; men and beasts alike huddled into what accommodation they could with the utmost possible speed, and all sank to sleep and rest.

"Intermission."

March 5, 1916.

I have been writing about past events; but I must write about something that has happened right here and now. The mail has come; I can't help writing about it. No one who has been without letters for four weeks can quite realize what that means; but I want to try to make it realizable. So I write about it straight away, out of turn, anyhow. Every day for the last ten days the post orderly has gone down hopeful, and returned disconsolate. Every day glum faces have expressed what voices have refrained from saying. Now and then some bolder spirit has tackled the Post-Office authorities, and pointed out to them that if letters were posted three weeks ago, and have not yet reached here, something *must* be wrong. All to no effect. Desperate wires to Cairo and other parts of Egypt produced nothing. We settled down to a resigned gloom, and included scathing remarks upon the postal

arrangements in our letters home, in the hope that they would be censored.

Then to-day the mail came. We had given up inquiring optimistically of the returning post orderly. It was on casually dropping in at the office tent to give an order against the present lavish distribution of orange peel in camp that I first became aware of a large brown sack, the contents of which were being avidly sorted.

“ Letters ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Any for me ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

Then they were handed over to me. I had to go on to stables at once, and didn't like to stop to read anything; but I held the bundle as I would hold a parcel of jewels all through that unusually lengthy parade.

Now to open them !

Food has reached the starving men !

The mail has come !

## CAMP ZAHARIEH

“ A moment's halt.”—OMAR KHAYYÁM.

*March 9, 1916.*

I am writing this at the close of a day which began badly with a cold dank mist, but which has pulled itself together wonderfully, and is ending in a thoroughly respectable state of normal sunshine.

As I sit at the door of my tent in a Roorkhee chair, the general outlook is entirely pleasant. The flies have gone—or are going—to bed, and the evening air is just

that blend of sun and coolness against which nothing whatever ill can be said. I live at the top of a quite moderate hillock, on a shelf cut out of the easily worked sandy soil. I can therefore see over the tents of the men below me, over the horse-lines beyond, and away across the waters of Lake Maryut (the Mareotis of old time, the white wines of whose fertile islands Horace and Virgil praised). I can also see, to the left, over the long line of a grove of feather-duster-like palms, the dim expanse of a far-stretching land, for all the world like a sea, dotted with white dwellings here and there for ships. The horizon stretches round in a semicircle, as it does when seen from a boat, so flat it is. It is the same impression that the plains of India make when seen, on one of those rare days in the rains, from the heights of Simla.

Real ships also are there, apparently sailing over the land, and their graceful triangular sails move along just behind the palm-trees where runs the Mahmoudiyeh Canal. Just in front of me, about half a mile away, where a sparse collection of palms and a group of square white and brown hovels mark a village, the ships have a halting-place, and, from a flight of wide-winged birds, turn into a forest of bending fishing-rods. Immediately before my tent, not a furlong away, is a convent, coyly ensconced in a grove of young palms, and protected by a great square of walls. A mysterious place, this convent, where nothing ever seems to move, except when early in the morning and late in the afternoon a curious kind of covered bus drives up—in the morning to bring a party of small children to their lessons, in the evening to take them away again. Otherwise the convent would seem dead, save that from my overlooking eminence I sometimes see a veiled figure pass along one



of the arcade-like verandas, and plunge again into the obscure fastnesses within. A curious contrast, this place of cool peace and quietude set among the hot bustle and preparation for war.

Nearer home, my plateau has been neatly fringed with stones by Harrow, and a pot of geraniums, a welcome patch of green and red among the drab yellows and browns, has been sunk in its centre. Tyn-ton, tired by a day of dusty adventure, is stretched at side-length under the geraniums, three-quarters asleep, the evening breeze ruffling his bushy tail and furry coat. But for the occasional cries of some men playing the inevitable football (I believe footballs must grow on palm-trees), and the distant babel of our Battery at tea in their hut, the world is at peace, and basking in the soft sunlight and balmy air. Soon darkness will come, with a strange Eastern swiftness, and then the magic of the Egyptian night will descend on this ancient land where Menes reigned five thousand years ago, where Xerxes and Alexander held sway, and Cleopatra revelled. I wonder if we hustling moderns are any greater or better or happier than they?

I wonder.

*March 11, 1916.*

I have just come into my tent after standing out in the still night. The crescent moon hung aloft, not sideways, as at home, but horns upward. The immeasurable blackness was pricked through with a million starry points. As one looked up, at the dead—ages dead—moon, at the infinite, incomprehensible stars, whose vast and unknown fortunes work themselves out alongside ours, yet how far removed!—as one just began to edge into an understanding of a

fraction of what it all meant, one was filled with an intense pity for our absurd little earth, writhing in the travail of things so great to it, so little to the universe. One felt a huge wonder at the folly of mankind, which, in the face of all mystery and beauty and awe, could fall to such mean and miserable tasks. One wept to find a world, so poised in the midst of strange and great things, given over to such small stupidity.

### AU CAFÉ

“ Let us eat and drink. . . . ”

It is eight in the evening. Outside in the Rue de la Porte de Rosette darkness has fallen. *Arabayyiah*s with their more than loads of fat Greek, Italian, and Egyptian ladies accompanied by their hordes of offspring have rumbled home. Even the almost ceaseless thunder of the huge motor-lorries, carrying men, equipment, anything or nothing, has dwindled away. Only the pavements are crowded with a sauntering and kaleidoscopic throng.

Inside, a long narrow room is set with small tables. At one end is a bar, up to which are drawn high chairs. Seated thereon are various (usually junior) officers, imbibing liquid nourishment. Also there are members of the other sex, smoking long and odorous—mal-odorous, more correctly—cigars. All these ladies seem to be French; all, at all events, speak French; none approach beauty, though a few have grace and a certain amount of smartness. It is obvious that they are on terms of considerable familiarity with most of those present, and they circle round, chattering, laughing,

drinking, smoking. (It is so with them every night; every night you will find them there, chattering, laughing, drinking, smoking, and then being "stood" a dinner. What a life ! one thinks.)

At this café it is possible to obtain a better and cheaper dinner than in most hotels, wherefore it is not only the patrons of the demi-monde that frequent it. You may notice at one of the small tables a select party composed of a noble lord who is also an M.P., two other M.P.'s, and a Staff Major, also in the House. But for the most part the habitués are subalterns, with an occasional naval officer, quite obviously on the spree. Also there are local clients, sallow Near-Eastern-looking men, who clearly know the girls intimately.

A party consisting of a subaltern, a R.A.M.C. Captain, an A.V.C. Captain, and a Major in the R.H.A., come in. It is their first visit to this restaurant, and they cluster uncertainly near the door, looking for a table. Pounced on by an obsequious waiter, they seat themselves next the Parliamentary party. They are bent on relieving the monotony of camp or ship's fare, but not in the mood for wanton excess, and choose Chianti (15 P.T. the bottle = 3s. English) as befitting alike their mood and their pockets. The girls interest them, but there is a unanimous vote of no confidence in them. However, inspired by soup, one glass of Chianti, and several weeks without seeing a female face, one of the party smiles at a flamboyant lady who has just finished a cigar, and is going a round of little visits to her friends "star-scattered" about the room. The result is a little disconcerting. She is down on the table like a thunderstorm. A torrent of colloquial chaff pours from her. Turning to the lady (she has short hair, a white dress, with an abbreviated skirt, and tops it all with

a perfectly irrepressible boisterousness), the Major, who is apparently addressed, insinuatingly observes:

“ Pardon, mad'moiselle, je ne parle pas Français; mais ce monsieur là ” (pointing to the R.A.M.C. Captain, who can say “ très bong,” and that's about all) “ il le parle parfaitement.”

She rushes round and attaches herself at once, deluging the miserable officer with a fresh and even more vehement torrent of French slang. The R.A.M.C. Captain smiles weakly, and looks as if he wishes he could run away. The Major again explains:

“ Le monsieur comprend tout ce que vous dites, mais il est très reticent.”

This provokes a renewal of hostilities until “ le monsieur ” can summon up enough courage and wits to say slowly and with great emphasis:

“ Je ne comprend.”

What retaliation the lady might devise it is difficult to say; but at this moment, luckily, a tall, weedy-looking local inhabitant drifts in, to whom she flies with instant devotion, and the two sit down at a neighbouring table.

A sigh of relief goes up from the table she has left.

In a little, the band (quite a good one) strikes up, and in a cleared space near the bar two of the girls dance together. They dance really well, and Mrs. Grundy herself could advance no objection to their demeanour. At the end there is applause, and they must go on. But no officer dances.

By this time a grave and stately individual in a red fez, and smoking a cigarette, has arrived to dole out liqueurs from behind another little bar halfway up the room. He is instantly christened “ the Khedive ” by the Major's party, and his kindness in condescending

to serve them with one liqueur brandy, two Kümmels, and a Benedictine, is noted and appreciated.

At 8.45 p.m. the proprietor (identified by this act; he had before been mistaken for the oldest habitué) rings a small bell. A quarter of an hour to temperance time. For out here, as in England, all drinking ceases at 9 p.m., at cafés, hotels, canteens, and officers' messes alike. When the last bell sounds, a slight groan may be heard, and "the Khedive" packs up and goes with the same unemotional stateliness with which he came. A great man, surely!

A little later, the tables empty, the girls vanish, and all are gone.

## THE MESS

"Officers' wives have puddings and pies,  
And soldiers' wives have skilly."—*Mess Call.*

One cannot always dine "in town." Means would not stand it, nor would health, for dining "in town" usually means returning after midnight, and one must be on parade at 6.15 a.m.

So, perforce, the Mess dinner must be faced.

Our C.O. is very keen on our being able to "do for ourselves," and consequently no caterer is allowed, but the Mess cook must manage. In the opinion of some, he will "do for us" in more senses than one before long. As a matter of fact, he is not at all so bad. His materials are not all that might be desired, and he contrives to make as much out of them as one could expect.

This is what he is provided with:

1. Rations—*i.e.*, the beef (or bully beef), bread, vegetables, and "grocery ration," for each officer, which is precisely the same as for each man.

2. Extras provided, when he can remember about them, by the Mess President.

3. Private supplies; *e.g.*, if Lieutenant Smith buys a tin of sausages for his personal breakfast, or Major Jones produces a bottle of beer for his own (and perhaps "a friend's") delectation.

Of course, the Government ration is not enough in some ways, though it is equally too much in others. There is more meat than is wanted; but one tin of Nestlé's Swiss Milk cannot possibly last nine officers three days. Hence the necessity for item 2 on the programme.

The meat is good, but hard (the effort of the cook to roast it without previously boiling it to get it a bit soft was cried down unanimously, and one officer broke his false teeth). The bread is hard, but good, except for a persistent flavour of acid. The biscuits are—hard. In fact, their chief flavour is hardness, if one may say so. Bacon, sugar, tea, marmalade, salt, pepper—all satisfactory. Vegetables good, but not really sufficient. Rice, flour, etc., are all counted as vegetables, and if you want them they have to be taken out of the small daily allowance.

The supplementary things provided by the Mess President vary considerably. Everyone wants his own pet delicacy, and as a rule no one gets anything. The C.O. introduced a suggestion-book, which was largely used by everyone except the Mess President, whose attention it apparently entirely escaped, since the sixth suggestion was, "That suggestions be sometimes paid some attention to." However, later such luxuries as fresh rolls, more vegetables, pickles, eggs, oranges, and, for one brief day, bananas, made their appearance. It has been found almost impossible, however, to break

the Mess President of his predilection for tinned fruit, which is, as we have unanimously pointed out, both more costly and less desirable than the fresh variety. Suggestions No. 9, 15, and 20, however, when observed, may effect an improvement.

The Drink Question is solved in our Mess very simply. The Mess provides "minerals," the individual his own alcohol. This is an excellent method, encouraging abstinence and saving trouble.

It should be mentioned that at present we enjoy especially favourable conditions in one respect. Next to our camp is a hospital, and when, owing to the shortage of fuel, consequent upon the microscopic allowance of wood per officer (2 pounds a day) and the price of coal (£6 a ton, and do your own carting), it was resolved to send a deputation to the hospital cook, that individual, a woman of charity and ability, undertook to boil milk, cook a pudding every day, and introduce us to the hospital tradespeople. She even "takes in" for us, and has prevented us ourselves being "taken in" more times than can be mentioned. God bless the Red Cross!

I have not yet touched on one element which, literally, enters into all our meals. I mean the flies. Someone was grouching about flies the other day, and was told by the "grousee" "to go—away," being informed that "Pharaoh was a better man than me, and *he* couldn't get rid of the damned things." One up to the Mess President.

But one can do a good deal. At the instigation of the suggestion-book, mosquito netting has been bought, under which repose the mess supplies when not in action. Small meat-safes, resembling those from under which a vintage egg looks out at railway refreshment-

rooms, protect food during the active progress of a meal. There is even talk of a great mosquito-net doorway to the Mess tent; but we are past the time when men could make the Pyramids, and no doubt this will not mature.

The day when the anti-fly appliances came into use was a great one for the Mess. We inspected and saw that all was good. Mosquito netting, meat-safes—everything was in order. There was only one defect: the intelligent Mess Bombardier had contrived to imprison quite a number of flies under the various protective coverings, and these fellows were having the time of their lives.

Evening shows the Mess at its zenith. Dinner is the meal of the day. Then it is that the stew or curry (the two varieties of meat food we run to) make their full-dress appearance (to be followed by an undress performance, “cold,” at next day’s lunch). Then it is that the cook excels himself in bread-and-butter pudding or marmalade pudding—*i.e.*, bread-and-butter pudding with marmalade (he is learning yet another pudding, it is rumoured). Then it is that the splendour of our repast is crowned by the supernal glory of an acetylene lamp, which was bought locally, and which, when it first starts, is equal to fully 3 candle-power. Afterwards it fades gradually to  $\frac{1}{2}$  candle-power until shaken by some obliging officer, on which it either (*a*) regains strength or (*b*) goes out, emitting noxious fumes which make further eating troublesome. Of course, there is always the possibility that someone may trip over a tent rope outside, in which case the lamp always goes out. But we are becoming more careful.

Cigars, etc., are private, not Mess, property. We were trying some new ones the other night. The C.O.



took one at the invitation of a polite subaltern, and lit it. Others followed suit. All puffed in silence. Then opinions were asked for. They arrived cautiously.

“Worth the money, I think.”

“Not bad.”

“Smoked many worse.”

Suddenly the C.O. said: “Well, I don’t know if it’s my cigar or not, but there’s a smell like burning wool.” Luckily, the C.O. is not taken very seriously, and the insult passed off without offence or rupture of good relations.

A little later the junior subaltern who sat next to the C.O. leaped up.

“Confound it! I’m on fire!” he cried; and so he was, to the extent of one pocket, which was smouldering resolutely.

“So it wasn’t the cigar, after all,” observed the C.O.

“Damn those trick lighters!” said the sub.

But, as we told him, he could always show the hole at home and say he had been under fire.

## AT THE END OF THE PASSAGE

“Black but comely.”—THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

*March, 1916.*

Leading down the hill from our camp into the main road there is a kind of passage, hardly to be dignified by the name of road. It is a narrow lane, springing first out of the sandy plain which crowns the hill as a faint track outlined by passing wheels, and straying deviously past a prickly-pear hedge and a high-walled garden over which palms peep. Then it takes shape

and coherence, and attains a definite curb and an asphalt surface, sloping steeply down between bungalows with shady gardens and wonderful splashes of brilliant convolvulus creeper, and apparently an entire absence of inhabitants, except between the hours of 7 and 8 a.m. About that time the Battery marches down the passage, and from our horses we can see down into the semi-gloom of dressing-rooms where Mr. Oiokephalos may be observed shaving, or into bedrooms where (it cannot be helped) Mrs. Oiokephalos may be at all events surmised to be taking her ultimate nap. Also, a little way down, there is, on the right, a majestic blue palace always bathed in utter stillness and buried behind the mystery of closed lattice shutters. A cool and impressive building this, with, in its well-watered and restful garden, many treasures. For instance, a seductive wooden summerhouse in two stories, the higher of which overhangs the tall white garden wall and the road, with a frail balcony clustered with a mass of purple creeper. Blue sky, white clouds and walls, green palms, and this great masterful note of colour; it is all a symphony of the East, exalting the senses and firing the imagination. And behind the white walls, stillness and mystery. Only once did I see any movement in the blue palace, when a shutter opened for a moment and a shawled head appeared and then receded. But it was not hard to imagine some Eastern Juliet in that balcony of a silver summer night, and some swarthy Romeo in the lane below. And then all the ancient eternal tides and storms and passionate calms of love—ay, and its wreckage too, maybe, with perhaps a life or two lost. For the pages of love out here have not so very seldom a scarlet ending.

But all this is fantasy; and it is in reality that my

little tributary passage passes the blue temple and plunges headlong to the main stream of the Aboukir Road or the Rue de Rosette—I know not if it is one or the other here, or if they both flow side by side in one channel like the Blue and the White Nile. On its way, just before the confluence, it passes a bare tract of ground to which builders have not yet turned their attention. There are many such in the outlying parts of Eastern towns, and they form a grateful break in the long lines of garden walls, as well as a convenient camping-ground for wandering Arabs.

On this particular plot of ground there has made its home what we have irreverently christened “the menagerie.” No one, indeed, could deny that it deserves the title. There are goats (for milk), chickens (for eggs, by which these Bedouins, for such is their race, make much of their living), dogs of infinite sizes and breeds, a cow or two (for better milk), a *bhail* or *byle* (according to taste in spelling, and also providing milk), and human kind of all ages and sexes. Also there is Fatima, who must be separately and more closely mentioned, and shall be, shortly. All this live-stock (and no doubt many species of a minor and less mentionable description) inhabit three irregular, flattish tents of goatskins, and in places sacking, propped up on low poles. True Bedouin tents, I am told. Outside the tents is a compound fenced with interlaced palm branches, which form a wonderfully stout palisade. One of the tents, I suspect, constitutes a sort of harem (for goodness’ sake don’t pronounce this word to rhyme with “scare ’em,” but with “scream”), since, passing by of a night, I have observed therein, clustered round a dim lamp, an undoubted mass of femininity.

Most of the younger members of the tribe spend their

time on the frontier of their territory, inspecting, commenting on, and often accompanying for a short distance, the traffic which passes down the Aboukir-Rosette Road. It was while she was engaged in this duty that I first met Fatima. I was "proceeding on foot" (the military equivalent to walking) down our passage to Carlton Station, and the tribe (junior portion) noticed me. With them to see is to act, and I was at once the centre of the following community: *Item*, one microscopic infant with black woolly hair (sex indeterminate); *item*, one infant a size larger, probably male, with a less woolly head, a most expansive mouth, and a genial disposition which tended constantly to expand the said mouth farther; *item*, one middling infant, almost certainly female, but without other noteworthy characteristics; *item*, one girl of, perhaps, sixteen, clothed in the normal black shapeless raiment of the female East, but without veil or wooden nose ornament; bare legs, short skirts; *item*, her elder sister, possibly eighteen (or perhaps no relation, but a wife of some kind); *item*, Fatima.

Surrounded by the crowd, it was to Fatima that I addressed myself, led thereto by a joyous anticipatory smile and a devil in her eyes. I summoned up my best Arabic.

"*Ismak aih?*" I ventured.

She beamed.

"*Ismi Fatima!*" (I hope I do her grammar no injustice in this report from memory.)

I cast about for further material for conversation. Ah, her age!

"*Omrak kam?*"

Another beam, and I was given to understand, verbally and with illustrations on the fingers, that her age was twelve.

A mature little person, I thought, taking in her self-possession, her independence, her almost imperiousness. With her shapely little figure, her brown but well-formed features, her glossy black hair and her perfect teeth, to whose charms every smile allowed testimony, she did her twelve years credit.

Now, my Arabic, as may possibly have become evident, is not yet a strong point, and I was very nearly passing on and dismissing my interested and more or less admiring (more or less amused) audience. But I saw no reason why, even if I could assail no other topics, I should not make the most of those of which I was already master; and, turning to one of the older girls, I asked her name with all the assurance engendered by the previous success of this inquiry.

"*Ismi Fatima*," said she.

Oh no! this couldn't be. Two Fatimas in one family. I expostulated (in pantomime). Fatima the First had a clear right to the title, I could not have her done out of it; Fatima the Second must think of some other name. After a moment or two she decided on Aziz, and Aziz she has remained, so far as I am concerned.

But by now new inspiration was come to me. I turned again to Fatima (*my* Fatima—Fatima I.).

"*Abuk fain?*" I triumphantly asked. I felt, as I said it, that to inquire where her father was would provoke an answer I could not possibly understand; but during that answer I proposed to retire in good order before my ignorance had opportunity to be found out. The actual answer, however, was not only unexpected, but one which I could not possibly misunderstand.

Turning proudly straight to me, and holding herself very erect, the young lady deliberately said:

“ Me missis ! ”

I was crushed.

Here I had been assuming she was a minor and unimportant member of an Arab family, addressing her as such, when all the time she was a wife !

Perhaps *the* wife !

Perhaps even—no, that couldn’t be possible. Still, I gazed doubtfully at the smallest child. Miracles seemed possible out here.

I found no Arabic to express my opinion of the situation for some time. Then I timidly asked:

“ *Ragilik fain ?* ”

It was just as well to find out where her husband was. The East is a place of jealousy and hot passions. I was unarmed and outnumbered. The gross darkness of the interior of the tents was very near by. Her answer reassured me:

“ *Mafeesh.* ”

*Mafeesh* is one of the watchwords of Egypt, rivalled only by “ na poo ” in France. It means—

1. Dead (as in this case).
2. Finished.
3. I can’t.
4. I don’t know.
5. Get out.
6. Go to hell !

There are other meanings—not, I allow, to be found in the dictionary, but current in Egypt at present; but these others are either unprintable or I have forgotten them. Reference, however, to any of our troops who have been in Egypt will prove the truth of what I say.

Anyhow, Fatima was a widow.

I need fear no sudden stab from behind; I could carry

on our conversation at ease. At least, I could have if I had known any more Arabic. As it was, I had to carry out my postponed retreat-in-good-order, and try to avoid being ignominiously exposed as one who traded on the knowledge of three sentences to be considered an Arabic scholar.

Fatima, however, was, it proved, vastly impressed, if not actually captivated. We have had many subsequent conversations (of a limited nature), and I have taken her photograph. Tell it not in Gath (where some of her relations possibly live), but I gathered indistinctly, from one very incoherent and pantomimic interview, that she had tried to come to my tent one day, but had been summarily stopped by a sentry !

And now when I ride down our passage with the Battery, at the end of it Fatima is waiting. She plants herself squarely at the side of the Aboukir-Rosette Road, and delivers a more magnificent salute than ever gunner, driver, or N.C.O., has offered me. That accomplished, she solemnly marches by the side of the Battery, keeping up with my horse, till we trot. Then she reluctantly falls behind, and remains a wistful yet smiling little figure, under the shade of the deodars.

Soon we shall be going; I must prepare a good-bye for Fatima.

*Later*

We have gone, and my good-bye was never said. I had prepared it so carefully :

“ *Ma essalâmeh ; biddy arooh.* ”

That is not the refrain of an Irish song; it is the nearest I can get, in Arabic, to “ Farewell ; I am going.”

I had it ready. I was going to say it that last morning when we marched out. I would not say it too soon; it was to come as a final, sad utterance.

And it never came at all !

For on that last morning Fatima was not there. Perhaps she was out selling eggs or milk. Perhaps she was ill. Perhaps she had become the property of another husband. I shall never know.

Only, she was not there.

Some of the tribe were there. Aziz was there.

But I would not waste that farewell on Aziz.

### WHAT WE DO

“ The daily round, the common task.”—*Well-known hymn.*

*March, 1916.*

Although we are “ on active service,” we are not engaged in actual warfare (unless it be against flies, fleas, heat, diseases, and others of the “ minor horrors of war ”).

Technically we are on “ the lines of communication.” Actually we are doing nothing except training and getting acclimatized. Not that we are wasting time. Every day sees us more fit to take the field and more experienced in the arts of war. The city on whose outskirts we are, although it does not provide a favourable field for Battery manœuvre, can be utilized for many of the special accomplishments necessary to artillery work nowadays. Outside there is the desert, over which it is not possible to move our guns, except along recognized roads, but where teams without carriages, heliograph-parties, telephonists, and, generally, the Battery staff, can practise their arts and crafts.

We have permission to use several of the loftiest buildings in the suburbs for signalling and observation



purposes. To these buildings we repair occasionally between 6.30 and 7 in the morning; for the C.O. likes to get our work over while it is still cool.

These little expeditions are very pleasant. We ride out—say a small party of half a dozen signallers and heliograph specialists—just as the sun is turning the fresh morning air to amber and gold, and tinting the palms and green grass and gaudy flowers of the trim gardens to even more exuberant beauty. We pass down shady avenues, past white-walled bungalows and palatial stone edifices, till we get a glimpse of the dazzling blue of the sea, flecked with the manes of white sea-horses, and rivalling the sky above, an azure expanse dotted with tiny white clouds.

Climbing a sandy hill we reach our destination, a delightful hotel.

Between the ranks of the parading damsels our little party passes somewhat nervously, and, climbing first a broad wooden stairway and then a narrow ladder-like flight of steps, finds itself on the roof. Thence we have a magnificent panorama. To the north is the sea, and along its horizon passes a slow and scattered procession of steamers. Neutral cargo boats, transports, hospital ships, cruisers, all are represented, and to relieve the sombreness of their dark hulls comes every now and then the white beauty of a delicate lateen sail. Nearer in, the water is quite transparent, and, looking down from our lofty station, we can see through the clear depths down to the rocks and seaweed on the sandy floor.

Westward runs the indented coastline, its sandy beach tapestried with a foamy fringe of breakers. Here and there a native fisher, up to his knees in the tide, casts and recasts into the incoming waves.

Inland, to the south-west and south, comes the city itself—far away, a solid mass of white, flat-roofed buildings, running down to a sea-front that sweeps in a splendid curve out to a fortified promontory; nearer by, a scattered array of better-class residences with green and gorgeous gardens.

To the east, the desert. Sand and palms, palms and then sand again, fringed with a green sea of cultivation. And now, far away in this desert, there suddenly flashes a blinding gleam. It is gross and enormous, this gleam, in proportion to the objects round it, and it is hard to believe that this huge glare of light can come from the tiny mirror of our advanced helio-party.

We pick them up, and soon a lively conversation is going on.

“Target is 2,000 yards, two o’clock, from here,” they tell us.

A moment’s calculation; then we wink out: “Ready to fire. All guns 15° right. No. 1 gun ranging. Percussion, 5,000. Observe.”

In a moment, after the supposititious firing of No. 1 gun, comes back:

“400 left 200 over.”

Fresh orders, further observations, and so it goes on until we “pack up,” descend the staircases, pass across the now deserted veranda, and wend our way home, very ready for breakfast.

Other mornings we devote to other branches of our trade. Instead of imagining that we have sent out our advance party to act as the eye of the Battery, and convey by the sun’s rays and across the empty air its sensations to the Brain at the guns, we contrive another plot.

The enemy—a Turkish force, with German guns, German officers, and German cunning—has advanced

in the night to the edge of the patch of desert. Our troops have engaged them, and are being pushed back on the city. The guns are urgently wanted. So off we go, the Battery Commander and Staff riding ahead, to help our hard-pressed cavalry. Arrived at the last fringe of buildings, the C.O. and his party are escorted to the top of a building, and from this height a Staff Captain (imaginary) points out the situation. This place must plainly be the observation post for the Brain of the Battery to-day. He must see with his own eyes. But, equally obviously, he cannot take his Battery up the stairs. So telephones are run out, officers and N.C.O.'s bustle to and fro, and in perhaps a quarter of an hour, or less, the Battery is tucked snugly away under some palms behind a group of buildings (and is thus invisible to the Turko-Germans), while the Brain and Eye sits aloft, working out angles, devising plans, and connected with his executive machine, in this case, by the slender filament of the telephone wire. It is all wonderfully scientific and ingenious, nowadays, this business of gunnery. Nothing like it for interest, either; for it combines, as does no other branch, the joys of thought and action, of making plans and seeing them ripen and bear fruit.

Then, again, there are mornings in the desert—without the guns, merely to practise driving-drill and exercise horses, or to carry out staff work. And there are also the mornings when the horses are taken out in a long procession, two and two, with the Orderly Officer in command, while the gunners and other officers are at gun-drill, that ever-necessary polisher and producer of technical skill and smartness of the executive machine without which the most keen and talented Brain and Eye are but dust and ashes.

So goes on the daily round, and here, to be exact in details, is a typical programme of one day's work:

Réveillé	..	..	..	..	5.30 a.m.
Tent flies to be rolled up by	..	..	..	..	6.0
Drill order parade, squad parade	..	..	..	..	6.35
Ready for C.O.	..	..	..	..	6.45
Breakfasts	..	..	..	..	9.0
Stables	..	..	..	..	10.0 to 11.0
First-class layers and Nos. 1	..	..	..	..	11.0
Water and feed	..	..	..	..	12.30 p.m.
Dinners	..	..	..	..	1.30
Layers parade	..	..	..	..	3.45
Signallers parade	..	..	..	..	3.45
Harness-cleaning	..	..	..	..	3.45
Evening stables	..	..	..	..	4.30
Water and feed	..	..	..	..	5.30
Teas	..	..	..	..	6.0

Sometimes there is bathing—nearly always, in fact. And of course there are many things not mentioned in our programmes—for instance, guard-mounting, and water and feed when we come in from the chief parade.

And then there are things which occur only on certain days, such as harness inspection, church parade, and the mails.

The mails! That touches a sore spot. For if ever anything was an invention of the devil, it is the Postal System here, now. One would think that an all-powerful, far-seeing, and thoughtful Government, knowing, as they must, how much news from home means to us folk far away, would take every step to see that we got it. Often we would rather have news than food. But we do not get it.

It is not as though it were all the fault of iniquitous German submarines and such-like. It is, it must be,

much of it, sheer bungling, or simple hard-hearted casualness. Anyone out here would be able to give instances; I will give only a couple which have affected me personally:

We took fifteen days coming here; we dodged out into the Atlantic, we steamed never more than 12 knots, and, of course, we went all the way by sea. Yet a letter, written and posted before I left England on February 8, did not reach me until March 5. No letters reached anyone until that date; and to a stranger in a new land, far from home, a letter would have been a wondrous comfort.

Now for the other, the outward side. When I landed, on February 25, I went to the expense of sending a cable to England to announce my safe arrival. There were various anxieties, I knew, disturbing the people at home, and I wanted to relieve them. So I sent a cable, an expensive cable. I sent the message under a guarantee that it would be cabled within twenty-four hours at most. That cable was delivered on March 8, twelve days later! All that time the people at home were waiting vainly for news. All that time the Post-Office had my cable in their pocket. They had taken my money, but they did not send my cable. Nor did they send the cables of any of my friends. We were swindled, that was all; and our friends at home passed through an uncomfortable week or so.

These are only two instances chosen from a selection which I myself alone could proffer. Some of my letters are missing altogether. Others arrive in the wrong order. There are a hundred and one—a thousand and one—perhaps a million and one—sins of omission and commission to lay at the door of the Postal Service. I wish I could lay them all!

To turn to more cheerful topics.

Our Mess tent foundered during a recent storm. Altogether it was quite a memorable experience. We woke up to sullen skies and a blustering gale. During the night there had been an intermittent rattle of something, sand or rain—I had been too sleepy to examine into the question—on the roof of my tent, and now it was quite plain that it had been rain. The desert lay, dark-coloured and alien-looking, under the driving clouds, and even the swift-speeding gale raised no dust from its surface. It was cold, almost raw. Truly an un-Egyptian day. Almost English!

It was during breakfast that the climax came. I had just finished, and the Orderly Officer had just come in to begin.

“Eggi—bacon,” he shouted (he thinks he ought to speak like this, being in the East, although the Mess Bombardier is a purely British product).

Then I felt a gentle but irresistible pressure from behind, coincident with an especially violent gust of wind. It was as if the Deity had suddenly descended, placed an enormous hand all over my back, and pushed me forward. I realized at once what was happening, and, not wishing to be impaled on the edge of the table, which was being driven into my stomach, as it and I slowly turned over together with the whole tent on top of us, I sharply upset it. As the Orderly Officer was sitting opposite me, and had no time or opportunity to get away, it went over flat on him, distributing enamel plates, pickles, marmalade, etc., in various directions.

Then there was darkness and muffled language from those submerged.

I got out somehow through the fly at the back of the

tent; others came to the surface through scattered apertures. Still there was one missing—the Orderly Officer. The last that had been heard of him was a stifled cry of, “Blast my bacon!” as that delicacy hit him in the mouth. He was buried alive!

But just at this moment came another frightful gust, and, lo! the whole tent blew away down the hill, disclosing the Orderly Officer, as an earwig is exposed by the lifting up of a stone. Expressions wholly unfit for the drawing-room escaped him as he turned over backwards and accompanied the tent downhill. But we consoled him with more bacon in a neighbouring hut.

The East is always surprising one.

## ONE DAY

“The heavens were opened.”—EZEK. i. 1.

*April 13, 1916.*

A curious day!

There is a yellow, murky light, as when the mist from the Thames mingles with London soot to create a November fog. But there is no mist about this day. Dry it is—dry as a desert. And the reason why the sun is hidden, the reason why our view is limited to the next line of tents, the reason why I can hardly see to write this—the reason is: sand.

The air is full of sand. My tent is full of sand. My clothes, my hair, my mouth—all the food I put into it—every single thing is saturated with sand. The sand is even as the rats in the Pied Piper, only more so. It filters into my uniform case, it insinuates itself between the leaves of my books, it drifts up my nostrils. The very air, almost literally, is sand. The light is

sand — sand-coloured, sand-impregnated. The desert has taken wings and is upon us. The world is sand.

Sand ! and sand in motion, sand flying along at sixty miles an hour—more or less (it seems more).

I think it must be a *sirocco*, or a *shimal*, or something. It seems serious enough to be. I will go and ask.

I have asked. It is at present called a *khamseen*. In a little it may be a *sitteen*. I inquired if it ever could become a *sabeen* ; but they laughed, and said that if that happened it would be “all over,” “no good,” *mafeesh*, with an expressive gesture of the hands. I may explain that the Arabic words employed in the above mean respectively fifty, sixty, seventy, and—well, I went into the question of *mafeesh* a short time ago.

I think these numeral names are undignified. I shall call it a *shimal*.

My tent still defies the *shimal* ; but I will not boast. I live in apprehension as well as physical misery. And things get worse. The morning began not so badly. True, I had to get up in the night, aroused by thunderous flappings and an ominous sagging over upon me of my mosquito-net poles, in order to “make fast” outside and drive in a tent-peg or two. I hate early morning (3 a.m.) exercise in pyjamas and a sand-gale. Still, it was a reasonable wind, with only about 5 per cent. of sand, and a bit later we carried on with our early parade. The real mischief began when I was out with the F.O.O. (Forward Observing Officer, in case you are not a gunnery expert) winking with a helio back at a flat-roofed building two miles away where was enthroned the B.C. (Battery Commander). Suddenly the building disappeared in a yellow fog. The helio still manfully flickered through everything, but I ordered “pack up: come in,” for I foresaw what was going to happen.



We rode back through a blizzard—a dry blizzard, a scorching blizzard, a pricking, penetrating, pestilential, blizzard.

Since then life has been a minor department of hell.

*Later*

I have retreated. To an hotel! (It is only a few hundred yards from camp.) It is noon. The electric light has had to be turned on. I think the present *sitteen* is becoming a *sabeen* or *mafeesh*.

My poor tent!

*Still later.*

“Curiouser and curiouser.”

About one o'clock I left the hotel to inquire into the health of my tent. I stepped out into an altered world. A sharp shower of rain had fallen. The air, purged of its dust by the waterpots of heaven, was clear once more. There was a smell of wet earth abroad. The wind had sunk, although the sea still surged in huge waves on the sandy beach.

All this just where I was. But here was a kind of neutral zone between two states of the elements. For to the north a strange clear light was appearing, full of the radiance of blue sky; while to the south, starting almost from above me, the heaven was a huge yellow turmoil of driving sand. Almost solid, it seemed, this seething tawny mass piled up into the air, and very ominous. The result of these blended lights was most impressive. Houses, trees, men and women, all were clothed in an unearthly glamour, standing clean-cut in a peculiar suspense of Nature. It was as though God were pausing before delivering some mighty blow.

And here, all apt to the occasion, there came out of

a narrow alley and over a bare patch of ground a weird procession. A little body of white-turbaned, black-clothed Arabs monotonously chanting an endless minor refrain. In their centre a long trestle-like contrivance with legs, and with in front a sort of swan's-head or prow of scarlet. Behind, two or three Arab women shambling along. An Egyptian burial-party. And so this man was carried on to rest beneath, surely, "such light as never was on land or sea."

Camp looked as though a slight snowstorm had visited it. Everything was clothed with a fine coating of white dust. Gun wheels, my tent (still standing), the tunics of the men, their eyelashes, all had this tenuous covering. And the whole world was still, ominously, uncomfortably still.

But now a smoky cloud arises from the north-west, a dull rushing of wind is heard. We are back at the old game.

They say these episodes last, generally, about a week. My poor tent!

P.S.—Further research seems to indicate that this *shimal* of mine is called a *khamseen*, not because it blows at fifty miles an hour, but because it may occur at any time during a season of fifty days. This puts me in the position of the man who—on coming home after a "bachelors' party," to be taxed by his wife with the possession of a lady's glove which she pulled out of his pocket—accounted for its presence by a long and carefully invented lie, and, when his wife at the end of it smiled and told him it was one of her own, which she had slipped into the said pocket, to remind him of her and bring him home early, sleepily but firmly replied: "No, my dear, no; I stick to my story."

I like my explanation best, and I stick to it. If it isn't correct, it ought to be; it is much better than the other.

## ABOUKIR

“ Make pastime ! ”—SHAKESPEARE.

“ I always feel like the Holy Family when I'm doing this,” remarked Teresa.

I murmured something about the Holy Family's not being very pleased at the comparison, but this under my breath. Aloud I merely pointed out that she could scarcely feel like a whole Holy Family. This was ignored.

Teresa, in fact, was sitting on one of the smallest donkeys I have ever seen, moving over the desert at the rapid and remarkably steady run affected by Egyptian donkeys. The little animal's delicate legs, so frail and thin that it seemed impossible for them to bear even Teresa, twinkled along under a back which seemed quite undisturbed by what was going on beneath it. The result was a method of progress which made any effort at “ rising ” a fatuity.

Behind Teresa and the donkey ran an Arab lightly attired in a flowing white *burnous*, a white turban, and nothing on his feet. A good-looking, cheeky fellow, whose name, of course, was Mohammed. Periodically he uttered the noise which is, I think, peculiar to donkey-drivers in Egypt, and which has more viciousness and venom in it than any other noise I have ever heard. If you clench your teeth, think of your worst enemy, and then say “ *a-a-ah* ! ” with a rising and falling inflexion (as you might if you were slowly driving a Malay *kris* into his vitals), you may approach within

some remote distance of an imitation of this callous and cruel cry.

I was on a beast little larger than Teresa's, looking far more foolish. The most graceful girl will find it hard to look statuesque perched on a side-saddle atop of a small donkey; but for sheer want of dignity give me the male man who goes a-donkey-riding in the desert. Even if he does not have to sit on a bundle of rags placed immediately over the hind-legs of his mount (in which case he should be grateful if no one whose respect he values catches sight of him), he will find himself astride a grotesque mass of highly decorated leatherwork, terminating, forward, in an enormous sort of hump. His legs will dangle nearly to the ground, his way will be determined by the donkey, and his balance will be precarious. In my case, the fact that one rein had broken adrift at its mooring to the donkey's bit, and that I could in consequence steer him only one way, did not add to my safety or my dignity. I did not feel at all like the Holy Family, or any member of it.

Teresa and I (it being Teresa's day off from her hospital work) had started early for our picnic. Eight o'clock had seen us seated in the Continental-pattern train used in Egypt, trundling (a good word in this connection) towards Aboukir. Of course we were laughed at for going there. Elderly residents of Alexandria (who had never been there) told us there was nothing to see. Superior young persons at the Sporting Club, in the intervals between setts of tennis, were good enough to say we must be off our heads. But Teresa and I went. We remembered the lines,

"What do they know of England  
Who only England know?"

and disregarded the dweller on the spot.

Forty minutes of stately progress through date-grove and village, and across the unchanging, unvarying, unrelenting desert (have I the courage to quote the Australian's description of the desert? Bernard Shaw give me strength! Yes, I will. Here it is: "Miles and miles—and miles—and *blarsted* miles of dam-all!" Forgive me)—forty minutes, I was saying, brought us to that tooth of land off which Nelson won his victory of the Nile, inside of which Napoleon beat the Turks a year later, and at which Abercromby finally polished off the French, and flooded 150 villages by cutting through the dunes, two years after that. A place with a past.

But a place with no present. We tried to find it, and failed, and were content. For we found the past. Far out on the point, whither we plodded afoot, free from the trammelling influence of donkeys and their drivers, we came on the old fort, asleep in the midday sun. The carcasses of great cannon, the leviathans of their day, lay derelict in the outer courts. A mortar—type of the most modern war instrument—raised its stumpy head and yawned to the sky. The ancient walls crumbled, and the massive doors rusted. There was no life, for the coastguard was siesta-ing. Only there were dreams of the past, when smart red-coated officers and white-breeched men stalked the ramparts, when the Fort of Aboukir was an outpost of Empire, a place of greatness and glory. And now it sleeps and dreams and decays, and black coastguards hoist the flag in the tower, and black women chase ducks round the bastions.

Teresa and I sat in the shelter of an old-time engine of war, and rested and talked and thought; explored the dim recesses of the massive central fortress, and

then left the still-sleeping place. Past an Arabian graveyard—an Egyptian Garden of Sleep, with all the picturesque pathos of death and silence and the sea; and then we came on Mohammed and his donkeys. Mohammed was very urgent, and we were tired, so we surrendered. It was just after this that Teresa felt like the Holy Family.

Mohammed and the donkeys (especially the donkeys) were the chief determining factors in our destination; but Teresa and I had expressed a modest hope that, when entirely convenient to Mohammed (and the donkeys), we might visit the ancient city of Canopus, which was, to quote Baedeker, “a favourite resort of the Alexandrines, who there celebrated the wildest orgies.”

Nor were Teresa and I unprepared to emulate, in our humble way, those great times. We had brought, to be precise, sandwiches, cake, and (the most orgy-like feature) one bottle of beer. These Mohammed carried, squeezed to his body till we feared the sandwiches would cohere and the beer burst.

It was quite lunch-time when we arrived at the site of the late and proposed orgies. The scene was a little disappointing. A large fluted pillar lay on its side, pedestal-less and capital-less; near-by, a sort of iron cucumber frame protected from our desecrating touch (and incidentally from our gaze) a doubtless precious piece of what Mohammed described as “Mosaic.” Teresa and I looked at each other.

“Shall we celebrate our wild orgy here?” I inquired.

Teresa looked at the prone pillar. It seemed to possess an uncomfortable conformation for sitting on.

“A little nearer the sea,” she said insinuatingly.

We climbed one or two of the mounds of dust and broken pots which now form Canopus (the Alexandrines were evidently very careless of their crockery), and found ourselves by the ever-lovely, ever-wonderful Mediterranean. All the way on our journey it had been with us, lurking blue amid palm-trees, breaking white over yellow sand, stretching purple and green to the infinite haze of the north. And now here it was at our feet, thundering and rushing with great blue and white breakers into the very antechambers of the past. For, indeed, the waves rolled over the floor of a Roman villa. There it was, the walls rising in a true square from the surging water. A rectangular doorway alternately sank beneath a swell, and stood out, like some Venetian portal, from the flood beneath. All along the coast the busy waves were eating into the buried city. Piles of the thin Roman bricks, smoothed by the water's ceaseless touch, ran irregularly along the beach. We were witnessing the last rites of an ancient city, the drowning of a dead civilization.

And there we orgied. Mohammed discreetly retired, but reappeared most promptly to receive the remains of the feast—two sandwiches, one piece of cake; no beer, but a bottle of soda-water, far more fitted to his Mohammedan morals.

Afterwards more donkey progress, another train journey, and, in the dusk of the Egyptian eve, Alexandria.

## FRESH FIELDS

“ Say ‘ au revoir,’  
But not ‘ good-bye.’ ”  
*Ancient Song.*

*End of April, 1916.*

The C.O. came into the Mess about 9 p.m., having dined at the local hotel. Four sombre and semi-somnolent officers were still left in the tent playing bridge in the light of the sole, smoky lamp the Mess possesses.

The Second-in-command looked up from a two-royal hand.

“ I don’t know where we load those two waggons to-morrow,” he observed.

The C.O. looked puzzled.

“ Oh, I forgot,” added the other. “ We’re off to Sohag the day after to-morrow, and we’ve got to load some waggons to-morrow.”

“ We’re off to—— ?” faintly asked the C.O.

“ Sohag,” brightly remarked his Captain; “ order came in this evening. I don’t know where it is.” And the game proceeded.

Now, we had had four previous moves since landing in Egypt, the extents of which had been—

1st move,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile S.W.

2nd move, 3 miles N.E.

3rd move, 2 miles E.

4th move (the next day), 1 mile W.

We were used to moving. But not far. The C.O. went to find his Baedeker, alien enemy though he be.

He came back and settled at the table as near the



insufficient illumination as he could get. Holding the map to catch the light better, he studied it minutely. Then he announced the result.

“It’s just about four hundred miles.”

Even three no-trumps had to give way.

“Four hundred miles?” said the M.O., almost as though it had been four hundred acres.

“Which way?” asked dummy.

“Upper Egypt,” explained the C.O., and he read the description of “this remarkably clean little town” from Baedeker itself. “It’ll be damned hot,” he added. . . .

It is.

It grew so gradually. It was like passing through the chambers of a Turkish bath.

We started on a bright but not oppressive day. Owing to the (now fully expected) inconsiderateness of the railway staff, we had to get 240 men into a space intended for 192. We had to leave seven horses behind, owing to absolute insufficiency of accommodation. We had to leave two trucks of waggons behind because the train was too heavy.

All day we toiled, helped by the Arab assistants of our very sympathetic R.T.O. (the inconsiderateness happened higher up). It was cheery to see and hear our helpers heaving lustily at the loads, and meanwhile chorusing their Prophet with invocations in a kind of “chanty.” One man would sing a line of solo in a falsetto-ish voice; then the others would roar a hoarse refrain. The Prophet seemed to be unaffected—or, at least, unresponsive.

At 3.30 p.m., an hour after the train was due to start away (this was owing to the trouble due to the lack of room in the train), we steamed slowly in the direction of Alexandria itself, looking like a huge serpent with

our hundreds of yards of trucks and carriages. At Sidi Gaber another engine came on, and, our original tail first, we set out on our long journey.

Now I want you to realize roughly the sort of way we went.

Imagine a vacuum cleaner—a long length of serpentine pipe with a broad triangular head at the end. The piping is the Nile, and the head is the Nile Delta. The Delta, over which we passed all that evening until dark, is an absolutely flat, cultivated area of monotonous country, rather like the fen district in England—canals and ditches and patches of wood, with here and there a village. Only, the woods are palms, the villages collections of mud huts.

The pipe itself—the Valley of the Nile, which begins at Cairo—is a narrow strip of artificially fertilized land running between two huge tracts of desert. The fertile strip varies in breadth, but almost always extends half a dozen miles at least on each side of the river. The Ibrahimiyyeh Canal runs most of the way close to the railway. So there are generally three arteries passing down this long serpent of cultivated land—the Nile, the railway, and the canal.

Also, close alongside the line there are strewn the relics of a gigantic dead civilization—pyramids, rock tombs, sphinxes, ruined cities, temples, monuments, and decaying buildings of all kinds. For something like 300 miles up this string of mingled wonders of Art and Nature it was our fate to pass.

Alas! it was dark before Cairo. We halted to water the horses at a small station a few miles from the city. A glow in the sky, a long line of lights—that was all we saw of the first city of Egypt. And although some sat anxiously up, peering out of the great wide-open

windows of the carriages into the warm night, they did not really see the Pyramids. A few said they did.

(Some days later, returning to Cairo on business, and awaking near Beni Suef, I chanced, while shaving, to glance out of the window in the dim morning light. "Curious little mountain," I thought to myself, seeing a high dark heap standing out of the plain, much as Glastonbury Tor does, only more so. Then I caught my breath, realizing. After that I saw the whole procession of Pyramids, ending up with Gizeh. And they were wonderful, past my power to make you comprehend—the more wonderful in the blue haze of that magic Eastern morning, which left them half conjectured, shadowy, unreal.)

No Pyramids that time. But when we woke next morning we woke to a new and fascinating world. A world of up-country villages, of cleaner and more convincing desert, of less civilized men and women and children—ay, and of camels! In fact, we woke to Egypt itself—Egypt pure. And it was hot. Not the transient, tolerable heat of Alexandria, but the torrid, furnace-breathing, smothering heat of the East; the heat that lessens, but goes not, with the setting sun. We panted, we opened windows (which let in the dust even more than before), we took off coats and ties. We sweated—and we went steadily on, farther into the heat.

Minia, Assiut—we rattled along with our snake of trucks and carriages and sweltering men and horses. The Arabian hills, the hazy walls of torrid and inhospitable rock, drew in and fell away; the canal wavered between a stone's-throw and a mile; once the Nile came almost beneath our windows, and we looked down a broad, smooth, dazzling sheet of blue water, framed in

high mud banks, and carrying the bird-like shapes of sailing dahabeeyahs.

And all the time hotter.

At last, Sohag. Blazing heat; a Staff Major of the Australians; endless unloading; toiling with interminable loads to camp—camp in the dust, in the heat.

And here we are. It is now hot, breathless night.

## UPPER EGYPT

### FARTHER SOUTH

“ To travel hopefully is better than to arrive.”—R. L. STEVENSON.

WE are now Australians. Our organization is scattered over Egypt—I mean our particular branch of the Australians, the Anzac Mounted Division—and we find ourselves occupying the position we have occupied since the beginning of the war (except at Alexandria), that of a single R.H.A. Battery with a Mounted Brigade. We are fortunate. Most Mounted Brigades have had their horses taken away, and their artillery, in fact if not in name, has become field artillery.

Our General and our Staff are quite a change. Bluff, breezy, downright, capable, with a horror of red tape, official correspondence, boards, and other War Office indispensables, they generally manage to “ get there.” I am pretty sure they would “ get there ” in battle. And, after all (though my knees tremble a little in writing this), to “ get there ” in battle is the chief end of a soldier, whatever some may think. Not that I would depreciate for a moment the value of method and organization. One of the marvels and excellences of this war is the way method and organization enable our armies to live and move and have their being over the face of this earth. The fact that the gigantic machine works, that the stream of rations and forage does not run dry and men and beasts starve, that

Regiments and Batteries and Divisions are transferred from England to Egypt, from India to Mesopotamia, from East Africa to France, that "the wheels go round" ceaselessly, regularly—all of this is a wonder and a credit. No doubt it might be better. No doubt there might be more precision and less avoidable discomfort, more forethought and less haste. No doubt there is muddle and incompetence and heart-rending waste. No doubt a race of administrative geniuses would run the machine with fewer checks and jolts and screeches. But—it moves. And great is the pride with which we may legitimately watch its movement. After this war we shall have done one great thing: we shall have fought it.

Seeing a regiment march in from the desert brings home the miracle of our daily life. At Alexandria I watched, one day, a battalion come in from the western front. Dusty, mahogany-faced, weary, ill-kempt, they filed past in a long thin stream of fours. No glittering badges to show who they were, no cheery singing, no jokes or laughter: only this long procession of haggard men—men who had "had enough." But they were alive, they were healthy. They had been out in the desert weeks, months, and they had lived. Their means of life and health had been brought to them day by day; they had suffered, no doubt, and endured. But they had lived, and fought, and come back—most of them. And all over the world that was going on, is going on, day by day. A marvellous machine! a wonderful triumph, despite all minor defects! For the major point is—it works.

To me, at least, the chief redeeming features of war are the strengthening of the comradeship of men, the widening of the boundaries of the individual life by

travel and experience, and the development of the organizing faculties of the State. But the price is too high. And—the price is unnecessary. We need burn no houses to get our roast pig.

I stray from our Staff. They are essentially Australian. They have been through Gallipoli. They have a habit of taking things fairly easily, and of differentiating between the vital and the unimportant. Before we had ever arrived they had decided that a certain specious-looking bridge (at which many a Staff Officer would never have cast an anxious eye) was unsafe for our guns, and we had to occupy an inferior camp site in consequence. But, on the other hand, I came up on the second day to report that unfortunately and unaccountably our office tent had been burnt down. The Adjutant was in it at the time, but made a lucky escape, carrying a box of stationery, and leaving all the office records (such is presence of mind !). I summed all this up briefly to the Brigade Major. "We've burnt our office tent down," I began. He smiled reassuringly (he was lightly attired in a shirt, socks, shoes, and a pair of trousers). "What for?" he asked, with a broad Australian accent. Then he went on: "Say, I'm going out for a game of cricket in the road. Come?"

We seem doomed to hot weather up here. And it will be hot, too. It has attained 104° Fahrenheit in the shade already, and it is only April yet. Nor are there any appliances to alleviate the heat—no punkahs, no *tatties*, no fans. Only a bare field and tents—single-fly many of them. True, there are rumours of huts.

"Going to fix up sheds for you all," the General announced at an interview which had begun by his shouting to me: "Say, old chap, what's your trouble?"

as I was unobtrusively trying to find the whereabouts, at Headquarters, of the post-office. Then he went on: "The Engineers ought to have been digging the new well by now. There were some birds here the other day about it; but they've floated off now, and we're waiting for an R.E. johnnie to come up from Assiut. Then they'll get busy. But you're all right where you are now; and if you want to know anything, you jes' come up here, and we'll put you wise."

Indeed they do "put us wise." They are most considerate, and, as I say, capable. The General was through South Africa, and has just come from Gallipoli. His Staff are chosen for their merits, and know their job. We are, I think, well off.

On my second day in Sohag, the General asked me to come with him to luncheon with the Mudir, or Egyptian Governor of the province. It was partly pleasure, partly to talk about some practice with live shell, which had been authorized for our Battery. "Great old sport, His Ex.," commented the General.

I wondered whether an Egyptian Governor's ménage was anything like a Persian Governor's, and, with memories of a visit to the Governor of Shiraz, prepared for a trying if interesting time. But it was all delightful. We ate far too much—eleven courses, I think—and we each drank two large bottles of beer (the Mudir abstained). But His Excellency talked remarkably good English, and was indeed a "great old sport." He had been in England just before the war, intending to stop three months, but after a fortnight had been ordered back to Egypt. Consequently his English experiences were limited. But they were sufficient to implant in him a deep and lasting reverence for the police force.



“Your policeman, he is a King,” he warmly observed. “He hold up one finger—so!—and everything obey him. One night I come home from the theatre at midnight. I walk towards my hotel. A policeman he see me, and he askèd” (H.E. always adopted the old English style of pronouncing the past tense)—“he askèd me: ‘Where you go? Are you not my Egyptian friend?’ Now, how he know that? But I say: ‘I go to my hotel.’ ‘Where is it?’ he ask. I tell him, at Westminster. Then he say: ‘Well, you will get there at seven to-morrow morning.’ At first I am angry; then I make friends, and see he is right, and he lend me map, and show me to the Tube. And I get home—and it cost me only two pence! He is a great man, your policeman.”

His Excellency is quite approving of my plan for the Battery shooting. I have selected a range which will only necessitate the inhabitants of one village being confined to their homes for the morning.

“Go and shoot them,” he humorously remarks, with a wave of the hand. And we agree that one of his officers shall ride out with me to make preliminary arrangements.

Then out into the sunshine. Two bottles of beer and 104° in the shade do not harmonize, I decide, as I walk sleepily “home” to an empty sort of flat the officers have hired as a refuge.

Our daily life is very simple. All parades must be over by about 8.30 a.m. on account of the heat, so réveillè is at 5.15 a.m. (it afterwards became 4.30 a.m.), parade at 6 a.m., or 6.15 a.m. After parade the men water the horses in the Nile, and either go straight on to a palm grove and breakfast there, or return to camp for breakfast and ride out immediately afterwards. In

the palm grove horses and men remain till 4.30 p.m., when they return to camp for stables and tea. Under the palms during the heat of the day, stables, harness-cleaning, laying (when the guns are taken out), and sometimes lectures, are possible. A monotonous and not very busy existence; but our main object now is to keep alive and overcome our enemies—heat, flies, disease, and the other plagues of Egypt. The C.O. drew the Battery up on parade the other day and “said a few words.” He told the men that they had probably got a pretty bad time coming; that they must not either grumble at conditions or fret because they were not in the battle-line; that everyone had to do his duty where he was told to; that in confronting the difficulties we had before us we should have to display all our soldierly qualities—steadiness, endurance, patience, and discipline; that according to our success in overcoming disease and enduring hardships, and in proportion to the smallness of our casualties, we should be able to consider ourselves a capable and efficient Battery.

So now to get to it!

### AT THE EDGE OF THE DESERT

“With me along some strip of herbage strown  
That just divides the desert from the sown.”

OMAR KHAYYÁM.

*May, 1916.*

The range over which the Battery practised was no usual one. Straight from Sohag to the edge of the desert is a matter of three miles. First one crosses the deep, sand-strewn bed of the chief canal by a high bridge over which pass all day camels with their weary,

lagging strides and piled-up loads, and donkeys carrying fat Egyptian farmers in black and white robes who hold aloft white sunshades (sometimes there are two men to a donkey). Also there passes the myriad foot traffic of the province to the town. Wiry Arabs stalking along with, trailing behind, a shapeless shrouded female satellite, who, if she be old and unpresentable, tugs the veil over her face as she goes by. Small children wander in from the near-by village; and black-draped shapely girls walk past with exquisite carriage, bearing on their heads graceful pitchers. All these make for the bazaar, close behind the bridge, a narrow street between mud dwellings, crowded, hot, full of flies and smells and noise.

Leaving the town behind, we ride along a high bank between two "cuts"—the chief canal and a tributary one. The beds of the waterways are dry, and in them, on their parched sides and along their floor 40 feet below, lie putrid and stinking carcasses of horses and dogs, the contents of cesspool carts, and other disgusting things. Rank and foul is the East beneath her finery.

The Sumurûn-like procession to the town files along this highway of the canal-bank, raised thus aloft to keep above the flood-level of the Nile; for at flood-time it stands out, a causeway, amid a waste of waters. Down on the cracked and parched-up lands which stretch away on all sides men are laboriously hauling up water in chatties from wells, or oxen and camels are turning creaking waterwheels—first a horizontal wheel pulled round by the beasts; then, in a clogged relationship with the first, another wheel, vertical this time, to which is attached a long string of earthenware chatties which descend into the well, fill with water, and are dragged up to empty their contents, as they go over,

into a little channel. Thence the water is carried away by a devious system of mud waterways to the utmost limits of the irrigated patch, which looks like some grubby chessboard. In other places threshing is proceeding; a camel and an ox, harnessed together, are plodding slowly round in a circle, dragging a curious machine something like a harrow, made with large circular knives. Men, women, and children, toss the threshed grain into the air, and the winnowed chaff blows away like smoke in the sun. Dogs abound, and bark and run at the passer-by; but they are curs, and a quick movement of the hand sends them slinking away. Obscene brutes they are, too; there, along the canal-bank, one is immersed in the vitals of a week-dead horse, pulling some dainty morsel from the region of the heart. He can have no sense of smell, surely! But he has a voice, that I know, and during the night exercises it in jackal-like wailings to his answering brethren in the villages around.

Half a mile beyond the canal-bank we dip suddenly down a steep path into the canal itself, and as precipitously ascend the other bank. Bad going for the guns, this, but they can do it. Then comes a narrow bridle-path through the surrounding lands, gaping with sun-cracks and, in some places, perilous to travel over on horseback. A mile and a half brings us to the village of Wannina es Sharqia, to be left on one side of our proposed range, which will be from the canal-bank to the desert itself. Wannina el Gharbia lies another mile on, and this we leave farther still to the left. Pretty little villages, these, collections of mud huts piled up amid palms on mounds in the desert, and each picked out with the white shrine of a saint or sheikh. And everywhere in the fields goes on the patient labour of

the plodding villagers, toiling with rude and inefficient tools unceasingly. How much might be done! one thinks. There is enough power going to waste at Assouan to run the whole land of Egypt. Tame that power, control it, dole it out, distribute it, and all this miserable, pitiful, crude scratching and hauling, this painful moiling for a pittance, would be done away with. Harness the tides; invoke the horse-power of the sunlight; use the forces of Nature, and man's labours will be a million times less. Maybe he will not always be happier; but with science and machinery lies the future, and a happy future if man be only wise enough to be master, and not slave, of the genii he can summon to his bidding. William Morris was following a false trail in his "News from Nowhere." A false trail? No, a trail which cannot exist, for we cannot go back along the road of Time. Samuel Butler with his essay on Machinery in "Erewhon" was nearer the truth: man must not become a mere slave and stud-groom to mechanical invention. No need, though, for this reason, to proscribe machinery and make the carrying of a watch a penal act. To be happy, man has not to discard science, but to use it well.

Just at the edge of the desert, where the flat plain of dark-coloured arable land gives way to mounds and hillocks and cliflets of sand, there is a little village called Sheikh Hamad. Its assemblage of mud dwellings scrambles right up the bank of the desert, and behind it, out on the sandy waste itself, lies one of the wall-less Arab cemeteries. Behind this, again, is a shelving ledge of sand, and then, half a mile back, the thousand-foot-high steep of soft rock from the top of which stretches the great Libyan Desert. On each side of this little village it had been planned to place a target, and

consequently the inhabitants of Sheikh Hamad were to be penned in their houses on the day of practice. Great care, I saw at once, would have to be taken not to disturb the Arab graveyard by a chance shell, and we rode out to prospect the position.

Close against the village, behind a grove of palms, we came upon a hummocky mass of ruins—mounds of Roman pottery, bits and ends of ancient Roman walls. Then, suddenly, something far better. Set in the midst of this chaos of comparatively modern remains there stood out the square end of a white wall. On it, when we rode up, we found true Egyptian figures in a kind of frieze. More than this: a little farther on we came upon another white rock, this time covered with cartouches of hieroglyphics. It was plain what had happened—just what happened at Luxor, at Karnak, at Medinet Habu. Some great King of Egypt had made and adorned a temple. On it he placed the writings of his time, the history of his reign, the pictures of his pagan deities. All was done in the simple splendid way of the artist who goes straight to his end the shortest way. Then, a couple of thousand years or so later, came the Romans. They found what he had left. These Romans must have been as late as Constantine, for they were Christians—early Christians. The zeal of their creed devoured them. They found the priceless flower of an ancient faith; they left a jumbled mass of garbage. With all the fury of their fanatic teachers, with all the narrow puritanism of their new-found beliefs, they set to work as Alexander in Persia, as the Mohammedans in the Nearer East, as Cromwell in England, as Napoleon in Europe, to deface and shatter and destroy what they could not replace. They took chisel and erased the pagan symbols; they banded

together and demolished the pagan temples. One stone left they not upon another when it was in their power to do so, these Christian zealots. And from the ruins they had made they built a new house to God, a goodly temple made of the jumbled remnants of an older creed, with great blocks still carved with the figures of Horus and Hathor, cut in half, upside down; with sections from giant granite pillars, let into squalid walls or adorned with flowery limestone capitals. A goodly temple, of the ruins of art and the relics of religion. A noble house in which to worship a gentle, wise, and noble God. So dealt the early Christians with Egyptian art.

All this is literally true. You may see its truth at Luxor Temple, at the Ramesseum; you may see it near Sohag, if you go just a little north of the place I am describing, to the White Convent. There, amid the tawdry architecture of these vandals, you will find, used as their material, the colossal beauties of the pagan peoples.

Can one be amazed at the contemptuous inflexion of a dragoman's voice at Luxor reciting these pious acts?

Egypt, then, lies buried beneath Rome. Art is overcome with the true Faith. We wandered about, ruefully gazing at defaced sculptures, mournfully contemplating half-demolished structures. Excavations might do some good; there is perhaps something left.

Suddenly my attention was caught by a thin black figure on the hill-side. Very still it had been, and very erect. Still, slimmer, straighter, than was quite natural. I pulled out my glasses and examined it.

"It's dead," I said aloud.

Then, as I looked again, "It's a mummy!"

We rode up to it.

Black, inky—almost shiny—black, it stood upright in the side of the hill, wedged up with pieces of rock round its feet. In the skull, on which the coarse hair still hung in patches, was a great rift. The eyes were closed, gummed up. The nose was gone. The mouth was set thinly in a peculiar ironic smile. The ears were perfect, shell-like. It was small—about only shoulder-high to us. And it stood erect, stark and stiff, glaring blindly out over the ruins of the city in which it once lived, out away across the plain of the Nile to the far Arabian hills.

No one said anything much, except a native with us who grinned and chattered in Arabic. Then we touched the black figure; it was hard as iron.

We left him where he was, our pagan forerunner; and as I lay in my bed that night, and looked up to the constellated heaven, I thought of him, standing there in the darkness on that lone hill-side, staring out blindly over the valley.

We saw him twice again. Once when we actually practised, and the Battery breakfasted in the grove below the ancient city. Then, as I was far up the mountains on a trail of which I shall tell later, I looked over and found some of our men had thrown him down.

“Leave him alone! Put him back!” I bellowed.

Afterwards, when he had been propped up once more, I again looked to see if he were all right, and there were some other men throwing stones at him.

This time I will not publish what I said.

How did he get where he was? That was what I wanted to find out. The evidence of the natives was, as usual, conflicting. He had been put there by an English soldier. He had been dug up by an excavating





"IT'S A MUMMY!"



party several years ago. He had been fetched out of a cave only a few days before.

“What cave?”

They would show us. And so we toiled up the steep, stony cliff-side under the glaring sun, until suddenly we came on a trail. A leg with a perfectly-formed foot attached lay in our path. A little higher up we found half a body, broken open crosswise so that the inside of the ribs showed. Then the “scent” (almost literally) became much hotter. Broken pieces of mummy lay on every side. The place was like a battle-field. And on all hands were rock tombs and deep shafts in the earth, plainly showing whence the fragments came. But there were no complete bodies, only chests, arms and legs and feet, and skulls. And every body was stripped of its wrappings down to the waist. This was because, when the embalmers extracted the vitals and the heart, and put them in vessels, they replaced them sometimes by a scroll of papyrus or a scarab. Someone who knew all about it had been here.

Later we heard it was the emissaries of the Department of Antiquities itself. If so, I am ashamed of their labours, and they ought to be. This scene of mummy carnage was not a pleasant sight. Surely the corpses, if not wanted for museums, etc., could have been put together and buried or burnt, instead of being strewn piecemeal over the hill-side? And lower down was a rock tomb with a painted plaster wall. This had been defaced at the back, where clumsy attempts had been made to break into a further chamber which did not exist, and was scrawled all over, being left quite defenceless and unguarded. Moreover, in their zeal to get to the mummy chambers, the excavators had in almost every case wantonly broken through walls, when

excavation outside would have obviously laid bare proper entrances.

To whomsoever these things are due, they are no credit.

A few days later some natives brought down another complete mummy for me to take away if I liked. As I knew of a museum at home that would be glad of such a relic, and give it an honoured home, I decided to try to ship it to England. But where had they got this complete specimen? Out of a hole in the hill. Could I go and see it? Yes.

A little party of four officers, a sergeant, a guide, and a coolie carrying a drag rope and a siege lamp, set out up the mountain. A stiff climb, and we came to a shaft about 12 feet deep, the bottom of which was apparently filled with rubbish, and around which were sloping walls of loose stuff, which threatened to cave in at any moment. Down this shaft scrambled our guide, accompanied by an avalanche of stones and dust. Arrived at the bottom, he wormed his way, feet first, down an opening, now just visible in one corner. Here was the mummy chamber. Who was going down?

I ordered everyone to keep away from the edge (not wishing to be buried under a few tons of cliff-side), and followed the native. Just as I was half through the opening at the bottom, and in a position of entire helplessness, a couple of fragments of stone came rattling down the shaft on to my head.

“*Shut up*, you damned fools!” I shouted. “Get away from the edge!”

Then I wormed on, down and down and in and in, until I felt my feet rest on something soft. I scrambled backwards into thick, smelly darkness. Then I waited to let my sight recover from the outside glare. When

it did so, I found I was standing on a mummy. On a mummy, did I say? I was standing on a heap, a flooring, a four-foot-deep pile of mummies. Everywhere were piled-up bodies, torn-off bandages, odds and ends of human anatomy. I was in a charnel-house. And all around was the peculiar stuffy, suffocating smell of mummies.

The place was sweltering hot. I felt stifling and somewhat revolted. But my guide was immensely pleased.

"*Kwayyis ketir!*" he eagerly cried, grubbing among the bodies. But he could find no complete unwrapped mummy, and no specimen as good as that they already brought in. So after a visit to an adjoining vault, blacker, stuffier, smellier, and more revolting, even than the one I had first entered, I crawled back over the pavement of bodies and scrambled out into the open again, dirty, evil-scented, dusty, hot, and glad to be out of such a chamber of horrors. After my description no others volunteered to go down.

That afternoon my mummy was brought in, lying in state on some tibbin in a G.S. waggon. Arrived in camp, he was laid down by my tent, where he gave a shock later in the evening to one of our officers, who mistook him for my servant, asleep, and tried to wake him.

And, indeed, I myself did not have a very good night. To begin with, I got to camp only at 11 p.m. Then, just as I was contemplating the new arrival, in the moonlight, a motor cyclist rushed up along the canal-bank behind my tent.

"Want me?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," and he handed me some papers telling me that 200,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition had

to be shipped to Qara by the 5.30 a.m. train next morning.

While the reluctantly awakened Q.M.S. was arranging this, I talked to my Australian friend. I showed him the mummy.

"He's quite a beauty," he admitted, and then added: "I've sent a head and a bust home myself. Me and the C.O. went out digging near Sakkara, and got two good mummies and a lot of coins. Took entrenching tools, you know. And I got two more mummies here. The niggers 'll show you where to dig, especially at Akhmim. They're afraid to go in themselves, I think—kind of superstitious. I sent my head and bust home labelled 'Groceries.' Polished 'em up with blacklead till they shone—looked fine, they did! But I sent a note to mother to tell her not to open the parcels until dad was there."

He had got two quite untouched mummies, and unwrapped them, and, I understood, found something under the wrappings.

"Jest here they put 'em," he told me, indicating the cavity by the breastbone of the mummy. "And sometimes they puts jewels in instead of their guts," he went on. "We found the plugs, where they put in the pitch stuff, and everything, in our bird," he finished, adding as he mounted his machine: "Did you see a dam fine chap out on those hills? I dug him up; couldn't send him home whole, and didn't like to break him up, so I stuck him there and left him."

So that mystery was solved.

That night Rameses, as I had christened my mummy, was a nuisance. In the first place, he had been put only 2 yards from my bed, which was in the open air,



GOING DOWN A SHAFT INTO A MUMMY-CHAMBER





and he had been put on the windward side. After enduring for about two minutes, I decided he must go to leeward. So I got up, woke my servant, and together we lifted him and laid him on the other side of my bed. There he lay on his back, looking rather eerie in the moonlight. Tyn-ton did not like him, and barked and was restless. But worse than that, whether in celebration of Rameses' arrival or not I do not know; but that night there was a veritable festival of jackals in the adjoining lands. Their uncanny yowls kept waking me from sleep, and now and then they got within a few yards of me. Then Tyn-ton would bounce off my bed, to the extreme limit of his chain, snarling and growling into the darkness. A white night!

All evil things, however, have an end, and eventually the ghoulish howlings ceased; and looking out from my bed, through the mosquito netting, I saw Tyn-ton fast asleep on the ground, with, beyond him, a long black recumbent figure—also fast asleep!

Then I lay back, gazed a little up at the star-sprinkled heavens, and at last I, too, slept.

## THE WAY WE LIVE

“Necessity is the mother of invention.”—*Proverb.*

*Beginning of May, 1916.*

Now, although we are on the borders of the desert, and are the artillery of a Brigade some of whose troops are occasionally in action against the Senussi, our camping arrangements are quite those of peace. That is to say, we have a standing camp, on the edge of a town, with no particular privations, and only those hardships and discomforts which are due to our geographical position

and the failings of the land in which we find ourselves. Those hardships and discomforts are, however, real, and may be serious in their consequences, so it behoves us to take measures to mitigate them.

It is never worth while to live in unnecessary discomfort, except as an experience or for pleasure. Picnic-parties are not a model for the workaday world; and what may be made light of for a day or a week becomes a nuisance or a danger in a month. Particularly is this the case in the East, where, if anywhere, it is essential to get rid of muddle and mismanagement, and order life as efficiently as possible. Most communities which find themselves called upon to combat Eastern conditions have the benefit either of precedent or of example. A Battery moving to India has forerunners, companions, and usually is the recipient of legacies. We adventure, solitary and inexperienced, into a new land.

However, nothing sharpens the wits like necessity, and the actual incidence of unpleasant facts has called forth the inventive and defensive powers of all ranks.

We officers have had to deal with our new surroundings by means of many undreamt-of expedients. First, it was obvious to me from the moment we arrived that a permanent existence among the heat, flies, and dust, of open camp would be intolerable—unless it were inevitable, in which case reluctant nature would have to accommodate itself somehow. So I prospected round the town of Sohag, and eventually came on a rather evil-smelling collection of flats, fronting the Nile. By unlucky chance an excellent flat, looking over the river, which had been vacant until the day before our arrival, had then been taken up by a young man in the Civil Engineer service. But another was still to be had

overlooking a kind of square, with an oblique view of the Nile. It was moderately clean, seemed likely to be tolerably cool, and had the advantage, possessed by practically no other houses in Sohag, of having a water-cistern on the top of the house, into which water could be pumped up by native labour. In most houses the water-carrier, with his skin of water, laboriously filled and transported, was the only method of water-supply. In addition to other advantages, this flat had a shower-bath, leading off the kitchen.

I asked for the landlord, and next day he appeared, a fat, rather ruffianly-looking individual, who might have stepped out of the "Arabian Nights." We called him Ali Baba. Negotiations, carried on with the assistance of a French engineer who occupied the top flat, and whose ménage was rich and varied in size, sex, and hue, resulted in a bargain for £3 a week. Too much. But we wanted the flat.

Behold us then installed, and settling down to engage the heats of the summer.

Our flat is an arrangement of four rooms—a central passage, a kitchen, and a bathroom and closet. The rooms are high, and floored with black and white tiles. There are the usual green slatted shutters to all windows. Needless to say the water system was initially defective; but that is put right, and even the shower-bath condescends to emit a reluctant and scanty drip of warm water (the cistern is on the roof) when the tap (cold) is turned on. The kitchen "chimney" (a stovepipe leading out of the window) back-fires a good deal; but a large proportion of the back-fire seems to go into the neighbouring flat, so we tolerate it. There is no furniture of any kind, of course, and we have bought a few cheap chairs, installed a stolen Government table,

at which eight out of our eleven officers can sit (the others eat off the windowsills), and hung an annexed lamp from a hook in the ceiling. Some of us have brought up cork mattresses to repose on in the heat of the day. Thus simply are we equipped to live our daily life.

Three chief enemies have to be met tactically in our new position: heat, flies, and dust. To combat the heat, constant vigilance in opening, shutting, or shuttering, the right windows is necessary. At the outset there were adherents of two separate theories in the Mess: one contending that at six o'clock in the morning all windows should be rigorously closed, and not again opened until the cool of the evening; the other holding that at all times and under all conditions it was better to have a draught—even a hot draught—than no fresh air. Experiments showed that eleven officers eating, smoking, and occasionally sleeping, in an hermetically sealed room rendered it unfit for human habitation, and the second school won the day. A complementary suggestion of my own to the fresh-air scheme was that mattings, kept wet, should be hung over windows through which the wind was blowing; but this idea never realized fruition, for reasons which will afterwards appear.

Heat being provided against by a system of judiciously opening windows and closing shutters on sunlit sides (a system, I may say, hardly ever carried out properly), the flies had to be considered. These were dealt with by the following means: Fly-covers over all foods, coarse fly-netting over open and unshuttered windows. If this scheme had been systematically worked, its success would have been greater; but, unfortunately, it was only too common an occurrence to come into the Mess and find a gaping shutterless void with flies merrily

arriving through it, or, at meals, to find two fly-covers one on the top of the other, protecting a bare patch of table, while the flies gorged themselves on the sugar and butter. Such is the fallibility of human nature. However, there are rumours of a scale of fines—half a piastre per fly-cover, and a piastre per window.

Dust, which arises with the almost daily *khamseen*, is only to be dealt with by a hasty closing of every window. At ordinary times it is not a real trouble in the Mess.

There are other ameliorations of life. The *goolah* is a magnificent institution. It is a coarse earthenware pot varying in shape and size, and made so porous that the water percolates slowly through. This has the effect of producing constant evaporation, which, by a beneficent and never-to-be-too-highly-commended law of Nature, reduces the temperature of the *goolah* and its contents. Often have I gazed at the array of shapely pitchers, ranging from two huge edifices with the appearance of inverted acorns, which have to be accommodated in wooden stands to prevent their lying down, to a dozen graceful jars with long necks containing crude strainers, and with broad mouths, and, gazing, reflected with grateful joy on the fact that, the hotter the weather, the cooler, proportionately, the drinks. Nature can be clever and kind if she likes.

Then there are the melons. How they do it I do not know; but those great elongated fruits keep cool on the hottest day, and to plunge (almost literally), when one has returned hot and tired from work, into a sugared slice of a water-melon is one of those rare moments of delight which almost reconcile one to the hardships which have to be endured ere it can be reached.

Other necessities of existence are generally not attain-

able locally. Life is a constant struggle, indeed, and needs thorough organization. Every drop of water must be boiled. Every source of supply must be investigated. Every store of food must be protected and constantly examined. Almost all groceries, mineral waters, and accessories to the Government ration, must be hauled tediously from Cairo, about 300 miles away. And all the time there is the fight with the heat and the flies. I think we all earn our pay.

We have now, after a couple of weeks or so, settled down pretty regularly to the routine which is calculated to take us through the summer. Every morning *réveillé* is at 5.15 a.m. (it will be put back as the heat gets greater and the sun rises earlier). Parade is about 6 a.m., and lasts till 7.30 or even 8 a.m. Sometimes it ends in camp, where the men afterwards breakfast; sometimes the whole Battery goes to breakfast in a palm grove by the desert, and stays there till evening. In any case, the men and horses are in some palm grove or other by 9 a.m. If breakfast has been in camp (and, for the officers, in Mess), only the Orderly Officer accompanies the men "to the palms," as the phrase goes now. The remaining officers are free to do what they please, and try to keep cool. "Water in Nile," as Orders have it, occurs at 12.30 p.m., and after this proceeding the horses are fed, as are all the men. Harness-cleaning and grooming are the only species of work which trouble those "at the palms" until they return to camp about 5 p.m., when they "water at troughs," go to evening stables, feed, have tea (at 6.30 p.m.), and afterwards bask in the comparative cool until "Last Post" at 9.30 p.m., or "Lights out" at 9.45 p.m.

Not a very energetic day—but remember the heat.

As for the officers, their day varies with their inclinations. There is a dormitory party, which seems to spend the day mainly in sleep; a bridge party, which would play bridge on the altars of the gods, the tombs of the Kings, or the shield of a waggon during action; and an energetic party, which defies the heat and rides out on some kind of an expedition almost every day. I myself belong to the last little group, and I am quite sure that it is the right one to belong to. Nothing makes heat more intolerable than giving way to it. The man who is gasping in a club is suffering far more than the man who is sweating in the sun. Of course there are limits; endurance must not be unduly taxed or foolish risks taken. But, generally speaking, it is better, always, to do something than nothing. Work always distracts, and at these times distraction is needed. Mental work will do, but I do not think it is so good or so healthy as physical work. I have tried both during these days of heat. Both are quite successful in ameliorating the unpleasantness of daily life, but give me a ride to Akhmim rather than a morning writing this stuff.

Here is a typical example of what I recommend. After parade and breakfast in the Mess, overcome the desire to lie down and die and have your horses brought round. Equip yourself with some biscuits, a couple of oranges, and a waterbottle full of weak lime-juice and water. Don't forget your pipe, tobacco, and cigarettes. Put a small book in your pocket, and take along an Arabic phrase-book. If possible, obtain a map. Remember that your groom and horses will want food and drink, and remind the former of this. Soak the outside felt of your waterbottle well before starting, so that evaporation may keep the water cool, and resoak it at wells from time to time. Sling a

camera over your shoulder, put some extra films in your pocket, and put on your field-glasses. Get a friend to come with you if you can rouse one from lethargy. Then set off.

Ride out—anywhere, so long as it is with an object. There will be convents to inspect, tombs to visit, villages you have not seen, where there may be “genuine *anticas*” (manufactured locally). Anyhow, ride out. It will be hot, and you will curse. You will get thirsty. Then drink, but sparingly. Prospect for a melon about midday, and select a well, and palm-trees if possible, whereat to lunch. Try to find shade of some kind—trees, walls, temples, tombs; loosen girths, take bits out, water, feed, and then call an easy and eat biscuits and oranges. You will now feel fairly weary, but cooler and relieved. After lunch it is permissible to rest, and even to take a nap (but not too long a nap). Also you may read, or write a letter. About three o’clock be up and doing again. If you have not visited your tombs, prospected your village, or called on your convent, do so now. Afterwards it will be time to ride home. This is the best part of the day. The sun’s fury will have abated, the air will be already cooler, and you will have a comfortable sense of having been physically active and of being pleasantly tired. Your waterbottle should still contain the dregs necessary to an agreeable assuaging of a decreasing thirst. If it does not, you will be able to anticipate with the greater pleasure that drink you are going to have when you get back.

You will ride in through an almost kindly land. Everywhere the last work of the day is going on. The winnowers are still tossing their golden burden into the air, to be streamed away in a yellow mist by the evening



breeze. The oxen and camels still plod round with the creaking water-wheel. The peasant, carrying his possessions, rides in from the town on his almost imperceptible donkey. There is abroad a sense of relief and of approaching peace. Lower the sun sinks, and yet lower, till he descends in flaming glory behind a grove of palms into the western desert. In the half-light you come to the Nile, placid, serene, majestic, bearing on its bosom a beautiful burden of graceful boats, whose spars and sails are as real in the river as in the air. There is a sound of singing from boatmen rowing. A faint mist hangs over the farther distance.

You will cross the Nile by a ferry to the little town opposite, a picturesque little town, with its long raised river front of square white buildings showing between a green avenue of trees. Here and there a light already shows in a window, and blends with the dying radiance of day. Very still is the air, and very still the water.

On the other side you will lead your horse up the steep path from the ferry to the avenued road, and ride back to the Mess. On the way you will pass all the small Sohag world and its wife, come out to air itself after the heat of the day. White-clad Egyptian business men in red fezes (tarbooshes more properly); Syrian and Egyptian women, veiled; the girls who come down every evening in the cool to bear back great pitchers of water from the Nile, striding along with queenly carriage, the pitchers poised on their heads, their veils just caught up between their teeth; beggars; children—an Eastern pageant. You will reach the Mess just as it gets dark, and find the windows freely open to let in the cool air, now that the flies have gone. And someone will rise from a mattress in the corner, and faintly groan: "My God! hasn't it been hellishly hot!" Whereat you will want

to tell him he is an ass. But if you are wise you will merely order two long gin-and-tonics.

Such is the programme I would advise for at least every other day during the hot weather. And certainly I myself intend to carry out my programme, and hope thereby to survive the summer.

But now has come a scrawled message from Headquarters: "Be prepared to move at short notice."

Well, well !

### THE VALLEY OF THE SPHINX

"The sun, the moon, the unwearying tides,  
The silent desert, shall remain  
When you have found forgotten graves  
Beneath the sand, beneath the waves."

*"The Conqueror."*

*May, 1916.*

This is a little sketch—rather, perhaps, a small series of water-colours—of one corner of the desert.

At the end of the cliff to the south of Sheikh Hamad there juts out into the flat plain of the Nile a headland of rock. From far away this headland catches the eye, because halfway up the sheer rock wall there protrudes a platform whereon is set a giant stone. In the distance this stone looks to be a man-made Sphinx. But clamber over the hill-top and scramble down, perilously enough sometimes, on to the rock platform, and the Sphinx is seen to be a mere freak of Nature. Man, however, has in the dim past availed himself of Nature's handiwork to make him a God, and the remains of a rough temple hewn out of the living stone testify to his worship.

Nor could any site be more apt for an altar. From

under the shadows of the giant monolith you look out over a sea-like expanse of the green Nile plain. Chequers, green and brown, of cultivated and fallow land, dotted with wells, varied here and there by the palms and brown hovels of a village, and divided into two by the broad meandering azure streak of the Nile, grow smaller and smaller till they merge, under the hazy pink mountains over opposite, into a misty belt of verdure. You wonder, as you look, how this vast river-bed (for such it is) was made, with its thirty miles of breadth, its 700-foot-high banks.

And the Sphinx marks more than a mere view-point. For at its base, where heaps of broken Roman pitchers show the spot on which an ancient city stood, there is the opening to a great ravine. A floor of driftsand winds tortuously up between great savage walls. There is a faint track, which shows that this stark valley of the Sphinx is the path to Somewhere.

In the dazzling afternoon sunshine the lights and shades of this impressive desolation stand out as in some vivid photograph. The bright yellow, almost white, sand reflects back the rays of the sun till the ravine becomes like a furnace. The inky shadows beneath the cliffs and under the stones are thrown with a sharp-cut precision. There is a deep, oppressive silence—a sense of mystery.

The sides of the valley are as sculptured masonry. The rounded buttresses and huge bastions and turrets of some massive castle rise for scores of feet from the gradually ascending sandy floor. Above them, the cliff splits and crumbles in a thousand curious shapes and shelves away, scored here and there by the square black opening of a tomb, up to the uneven contour where it cuts the blue of the sky.

It is evident that this sculpturing is the work of water, that this valley was once some swirling tributary, pouring its thousands of tons of liquid into the vast body of the thirty-mile-broad Nile. Every stone in the bottom of the course is rounded and smooth; you can see where were cascades, runnels, waterfalls, deep clear pools. In this land of intolerable drought and heat it is almost like the mirage of some other country or age. You think back to the day when the sound of rushing water filled this weary place. It is like a vision of sweet waters and green fields to agonized sailors dying of thirst in a silent ocean far from land. How many years, how many centuries, since the noise of torrents filled this deep ravine ?

Half a mile or so from the Sphinx you will find a great barrier across your way. Here was a waterfall 20 feet high, and the flood came tumbling sheer over into dark foaming pools beneath. You will at first despair of riding farther, but eventually you will find a narrow crevice up which your horse can scramble. Then you will go on, amid the utter silence, over the soft sand, between huge, monstrous blocks of stone, and under the shadow of the battlements of Nature.

The ravine closes in. The path dwindles to a faint track, and twists continually. Looking back, you are in the midst of a scene of wild and primitive grandeur. The walls of the valley are almost sheer from the shadows at their feet to the blue sky. The tortuous way you have come is quite concealed. You are enclosed in a tiny sandy cell guarded by towering heights.

On a little farther a new obstacle bars the way. A huge drift of sand runs obliquely down from a tributary ravine. You can creep round its extreme edge, and a new vista of rocky desolation discloses itself, and always

the utter silence, the dead mystery of the place. No sign of life, nothing but sterile splendour.

Over drifts, between great boulders, up stony watercourses, you will wind on and always up, until at last a great waste of blown sand fills the valley. Then you will leave your horse and climb on afoot. You will scale the sides of the ravine, and come out on the top. There you will see the desert.

On every side lies a sea of barrenness, sweltering in the sun. It is not level, but cut everywhere by the steep banks of what were once watercourses. Near-by the floor is a mass of pebbles, worn smooth by the action of water, like a beach at home. Farther out this gives way to sand, drifted, piled up into heaps, rising dimly afar off into interminable yellow dunes. A hot but fresh breeze is blowing. Over all hangs a dead and brooding silence. It is a horror of lifelessness that oppresses and appals. A cruel, titanic manifestation of heat and sterility and death.

But it is fresh and it is clean. There is no pollution here. This is virgin, primeval. The stone you touch has felt no other hand. The precise view that meets your eye has met none before. And there are thousands of leagues of it. It is shudderful even to think of. You imagine being out there, far, alone, and turn sick. But it is wonderful and great.

Then the sun sets. The breeze—that clean fresh wind blowing from the undefiled vastness beyond—grows cool and delicious. A glory of gold rages behind the western sandhills, and the desert is a wonder of yellow and crimson and black beneath an opal sky. Last of all Night comes, Night and her myriad stars, and the silent mystery below looks to the silent mystery above. There is utter stillness, a vast peace.

“ I SAW THE SOLITARY RINGDOVE THERE ”

“ The Palace that to Heav’n his pillars threw,  
And Kings the forehead on his threshold drew.

I saw the solitary Ringdove there,  
And ‘ Coo, coo, coo ! ’ she cried, and ‘ Coo, coo, coo ! ’ ”\*

*Quatrain inscribed by some stray hand  
among the ruins of Persepolis.*

*Early in May, 1916.*

“ I suppose the donkeys will come to about sixty piastres,” observed the Treasurer, who ordinarily was the Junior Subaltern.

(“ Coo, coo, coo ! Coo, coo, coo ! ”)

“ That’ll be about five bob apiece,” he went on.

(“ Coo, coo, coo ! Coo, coo, coo ! ”)

“ I don’t call that too much.”

Nobody took the slightest notice of him; but somewhere amid the pillars that were thrown to heaven around us the solitary ringdove answered his centuries-old call of wonder and lamentation. And the Treasurer lapsed into the silence of the rest of us.

We were recuperating for a moment from the arduous labour of seeing Thebes in May. It had nearly been too much for the Senior Subaltern. Rumour darkly whispers that at one point in the proceedings he whispered to the Right Section Commander: “ How many more of these damned tombs have we got to see ? ” But then the heats of May at Luxor are bad for the soul.

I was the other member of the party, and we had hastened, as soon as we heard of the approaching removal of our Battery to another sphere of influence, to apply for leave—while we were, so to speak, in the

\* “ Kuja ” is the Persian for “ where ? ”

district—to visit Thebes and Karnak. Three days we got, and despite the heat we viewed in that time practically all the remains of those cities of temples and tombs. Viewed, I say; for properly to see, digest, understand them would be the work of years. We only broke the shell of the egg.

Now, I do not want to attempt the writing of a guide-book. I am not qualified for the task, and Mr. (or Herr) Baedeker has already done it so adequately that one is compelled to marvel and admire. Oh (I used to think)—oh to be Baedeker! To spend life starring sights and certifying hotels! To have that encyclopædic knowledge! To know the exact tip due to every guide! To have the habitable earth as a home! Who was Baedeker? Why could I not travel with him?

And, oh! the crushing disillusion when I found he was not a man, but a publisher! That his travels were those of a syndicate. It was as though one had discovered God to be a Limited Company.

No, I promise I will not write a guide-book. But I do want just faintly to indicate, if I can, the feelings of an ordinary man when he is brought face to face with the past of Egypt.

Sight-seeing is not easy. Even the physical task of tramping round temples or galleries, of standing to look at tombs or statues, of gazing at pictures or monuments, is fatiguing. And if one is to sight-see adequately—that is, intelligently—the strain is much greater. It means preparation, thought, memory. It is no use merely gaping at gods or marvelling at mummies. That is not only uninformative, but very soon palls. True, there are some wonders, such as the Sphinx, or the Tomb of Xerxes at Persepolis, which instantly arrest

the mind and fire the imagination. But the person who would go about the world simply seeking marvels is like the man who should roam about literature simply seeking murders. His mind would be narrow and his interests few. It is just the same with sight-seeing as it is with music or with art: unless one be adequately prepared and sufficiently educated, only the crudest effects can be appreciated.

The inner essence of the Egyptian monuments lies not only in their beauty, but in their history and meaning. They must always be arresting; when they are understood they are overwhelming. I cannot quite convey why. It is not only because they pertain to the infancy of mankind, because they are old almost beyond the ability of the mind to comprehend. It is not only because they are colossally and majestically conceived. It is not, even, because they deal with a black and uncanny set of beliefs, a ritual of a worship of the dead, of the homage to strange and horrid gods, of the adventures of the soul in the underworld. It is not any of these or all of them together, nor is it the continual and overshadowing presence of death, which compels a curious and almost shuddering fascination. All I can say is that, if any man or woman begin the study of the works, arts, history, religion, and habits, of the ancient Egyptians, he will find himself under the dominion of an extraordinary and eerie interest. He will be hypnotized by the attraction of it. Thebes, Memphis, Abydos, Sakkara, and all they connote, are like Omar Khayyám, like the Bible, like Shakespeare, like Rembrandt, like Handel and Beethoven: they have the greatness and mystery of God and of Death.

We sat among the ruins of Medinet Habu, in the hall of Rameses III. Over against us rose a stupendous line



of columns, graven with gods and hieroglyphics; behind them ran a colonnade decorated with scenes from the festival of the great god Min; at the back of the temple towered the hills in which were burrowed the painted tombs of the Pharaohs; between us and the Nile, set in the flat plain like lonely giants seated in state through the ages, the Colossi of Memnon looked unwearingly to the east; the sun poured with fierce and brutal power into the ancient court; it was midday, and a great stillness held the earth—save for that tireless, pathetic “Coo, coo, coo!” of the ringdove.

Even the Treasurer spoke no more of the price of donkeys.

It was the end of our visit, and we had spent three wonderful days. Karnak, with its jumbled mass of marvels of many ages; with its tremendous Temple of Amon; its pylons; its palaces and festal halls; its courts and colonnades; its sacred lake and giant scarabæus; its weird and ominous cell of Sekhmet, the war-goddess, with the black, lion-headed image, lit by a ray of light from above—Karnak came first.

And here I would say just a word or two on a couple of subjects—restorers and desecraters. As to restorers, no one could have a greater respect than I for the ability, energy, and learning, of those Egyptologists to whom it is often due that we, to-day, are able to see the marvels of ancient Egypt at all. But to me, a poor layman, it seems that I want to see these marvels more or less as time, and sometimes the cruel defacement of vandals, have left them. Let them be kept sacred and intact, let them even be restored in minor details; but rather than have, as it were, a temple, or even a pillar, built over again, I would prefer to see its pieces lying on the ground. I would prefer, too, to see

the contents and accessories of these tombs and temples *in situ* than in a museum; I would prefer to see the chapel of the Cow-goddess Hathor in its natural surroundings at Deir-el-Bahari than at Cairo. Maybe these things are better where they are, and more people can get to them; but think how much greater the delight in seeing the flesh and blood, as it were, of Thebes instead of its dry bones.

So much for restorers and preservers; when we come to desecraters a different tone is called for. Anyone who has seen the ruins at Luxor, or, for the matter of that, at Memphis or at Persepolis, or any other great historical place, must feel a passion of indignation at the work of the desecrater. Persian, Arab, Early Christian, Roman, whoever the evil-doer be, may he burn for it, one cries, in everlasting fire! Even Mrs. Grundy has been at work—or some Roman or ecclesiastical male Grundy—defacing sculptures in the name of decency, with the inevitable result that an unashamed work of art becomes as obtrusively indecent as a statue with a fig-leaf. These people would have clothed the Venus of Milo, or left less of her than ever for our benefit. To Hades with all desecraters whether they do their evil work in the cause of Notoriety, Religion, or Morality! (And in these names have most of the crimes of this world been perpetrated.)

It is no joke, physically, to have walked over Karnak on a May morning. Luckily, we had had the foresight to bring waterbottles, or our state would have been worse than it was. Lord! the joy a waterbottle can be! The delightful weight of it when lifted to the lips—a liquid, wobbling weight! The cool feel of the wet felt on it (the felt should *always* be kept wet—but it can't in the desert)! The little struggle with the cork, the

effort to get the thing at the right angle, so that the mouth meets the rim of the aluminium spout without intervening straps ! And then the rich gurgle of lemon and water passing into the gullet ! *Gluck, gluck, gluck !* And at each *gluck* a feeling of ambrosia percolating into arid regions of unwatered clay ! (As a matter of fact, this wholesale method of drinking is far too wasteful for deserts and places where they parch. It is better, though not so satisfactory, to carry a little rubber tube, like those which operate the shutters on cameras, and suck through that.) Oh, blessed be the waterbottle, that is "as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" !

As a matter of fact, Karnak nearly finished the Senior Subaltern. After lunch at the hotel—a delightful place of dark cloistered passages and quiet coolth, with, outside, a great veranda and the shade of tall trees—he professed an urgent need of sleep, from which, indeed, nothing could keep him. He retired to his bedroom, and shortly proclaimed, by his usual method, that he slumbered. One by one we others succumbed to the infection. The Right Section Commander soon went "to write a few letters." The Treasurer, who, in view of his being the Junior Subaltern, had been compelled to the pleasing duty of disbursing for everything, with the comfortable assurance that if he remembered the items and kept proper accounts he would be reimbursed at the end—the Treasurer thought he would like to jot down what we had spent. (We had each given him a pound on account, and expressed great doubt of his probity.) I was left alone on the broad veranda in the humming, quivering heat. And presently the quaint modern Egyptian decorations on the hotel walls trembled and faded, and the whole world became a tangled mass

of heat and sight and sound, buzzing and blending, and sleep took me also.

We all woke in time to see Luxor Temple before it was too dark. We had to face the obvious contempt of the aristocratic Abdou, our guide, who plainly had no patience with those who came to Luxor to sleep (quite right: we never sinned again). He also had a mighty and seething contempt for Early Christians who defaced temples, with which emotion we found ourselves more in accord. I even think he had a secret contempt for those who forbade the further excavation of Luxor Temple lest it should disturb the tomb of a Mohammedan sheikh, which rises like some parasitic mistletoe plant in a great oak. But this contempt he prudently dissembled.

It was after we had made the acquaintance of the nearly perfect statue of Rameses; had stood, puny pignies, among the colossal pillars of the court of Amenophis III.; and passed through the sculptured Room of Birth, that, sitting at ease on the river front, I heard, far off, a sound of strange sweet singing. The sun was sinking behind the mountains of the Tombs of the Kings, and all the broad flood of the Nile was a smooth splendour of reflected glory. No faintest air rippled the surface, and the only sound or motion was that of a graceful felucca being rowed slowly down the stream. Then, far away, began this strange, sweet music: not a minor chant, as is usual among the Arabs, but a beautifully balanced major melody. And yet, though not minor, the chant was inexpressibly sad, sad with the inevitable and lovely peace of death. Death it was that conceived it, too, for in a little came the now familiar little body of men and women, hurrying along and bearing in their midst, held high on their

shoulders, the prow-headed bier, draped with cloth—just a hollow box to carry the corpse to the grave. As they went they sang this lovely melody, and I thought that they could surely not think death a very dreadful thing, since they hymned it with such sweet sadness. It was the emblem of rest and of peace, that song, and only once before I have heard its like—in an old Welsh lullaby. So, I think, all our death-songs should be lullabies; for Death is the Great Peace. (But we sing, not for the dead, but for ourselves.)

At 6.30 the next morning we set out for the Tombs of the Kings. At least, nominally at 6.30; actually, owing to the somniferous and gustatory capacities of the Senior Subaltern, it was more nearly 7 a.m. The Treasurer remonstrated with him; but something more than remonstrance is wanted with a man who orders another egg ten minutes after he should be on his way to the Tombs of the Kings.

Now, the Pharaohs in their sepulchral arrangements were divided between a desire for pomp and a desire for safety. They wished their fame to be perpetuated, but they wished their corpses to be safe. They solved the difficulty, and combined ostentation with secrecy, by building temples in the valleys and being buried in the hills. Their temples were as obvious and their graves as inconspicuous as possible. Why, then, did they decorate their tombs? Why, after digging a long shaft into the bowels of the mountain, carefully concealing the door into a funeral chamber, and then, so far as they could, obliterating any traces of where the tomb was, did they paint wonderful figures and scenes on the walls of vaults and passages?

Here we come to the question of the true meaning of almost all ancient Egyptian art. All these reliefs, all

these paintings on walls, all these statues and stelæ, were primarily for use, and not for ornament. The ancient Egyptian held the theory that the soul lived after death. The body lived after death. The whole man or woman lived after death, and had the same needs, passions, and desires, as in this world. How, then, could the corpse be provided with the material for a happy hereafter?

Many nations and civilizations have had this problem to solve, and they have solved it in various ways. The ancient Egyptian solution was contained in the theory that pictures, sculptures, and statues, could take the place of reality—that they could, so to speak, incarnate actuality. This was the keynote of all their religious and funerary art. The gods are athirst! Very well, depict their most humble and obedient servant Rameses giving them a drink. Rameses himself dies. Very good; paint scenes imitating his glory on earth, so that, where he has gone, he may repeat them. That is the notion at the root of all art in the temples, the tombs, the monuments, of Egypt; it is the reason of mummies and the cause of the Pyramids. The dead did not die, and the artist, the sculptor, and the embalmer, enabled them to lead a happy life beyond the tomb.

The Tombs of the Kings have an impressive setting. The tombs of Rameses and Amenophis and Thutmosis have not the grandeur of the tombs of Xerxes and Darius, because Xerxes and Darius flaunted their splendid sepulchres before the whole world, and from far across the plain of Merv Dasht, from Persepolis itself, the giant crosses cut into the living rock stand out with a colossal boldness. But the wild and barren hills in the sides of which the Pharaohs sank their burial

chambers have an impressive and a sterile grandeur of their own. The path from the Nile first winds over cultivation and along embankments until it passes the tomb of Sethos I. at Kurnah, and plunges into the mountains. From here the way lies down a heat-stricken valley, among ever-growing yellowish hills. At last, in the depths of a shut-in chasm among tall crumbling heights, the embodiment of death itself in their utter desolation, there open the mouths of the royal graves. They are all much alike, though varying in internal construction.

First there is a long downward shaft, the air of which is like that of a cool vault after the furnace outside. The eyes refuse immediately to accustom themselves to the half-light, and the feet blunder uncertainly on. Down out of the daylight we pass, and rather dim incandescent electric globes are the only illumination. There is a strong smell of bats. At the beginning the walls are generally rough-hewn out of the limestone, but later there are vaults or chambers decorated with paintings—or, rather, painted sculptures; or the wall itself is so adorned. At last we reach the royal mummy chamber, and maybe the sarcophagus and mummy are still there, under a glass case and lit by electric lamps.

The paintings and painted sculptures are usually either representations of the pomps, ceremonies, and habits, of the dead King, or scenes from the Book of the Underworld. Strange gods and goddesses, ibis-headed, cow-headed, falcon-headed; genii and dæmons; the Sun himself; the King in a hundred postures—they all stand there in a strange and somewhat ghastly pageant. The colours are so fresh that the painter's brush might have left them there that very morning.

And we are hundreds of feet into the solid rock, in the bowels of the mountain.

It is all a rather ironical lesson in the frailty of faiths—these long-ago worshippers in their simple belief showing their homage to their gods and fulfilling their rites of the dead, and we coming and gaping open-mouthed at their work, writing treatises on their quaint heresies, and desecrating their most pious acts, bringing to naught their most meticulous observances by throwing open their arcana and carrying off their corpses. Will some new-religionist of the future treat Westminster Abbey thus, one wonders? For it is the way of the creed of one age to become the curiosity of the next. And a religionist generally has scant reverence for another's religion.

From the Tombs of the Kings we made our way over the jagged yoke of hill to the south-east down to the wonderful temples of Deir-el-Bahari. Here there was much danger of the Senior Subaltern's giving way to sleep at the rest-house, where we had lunch. We allowed him half an hour, and then prodded him on to the temple of Queen Hatshepsut and the memorable expedition to Punt. Perhaps no single view in all Egypt is more striking than the sight of the terraced temple of the Queen rising up to the sheer cliffs behind—a jewel of white colonnades in a giant setting of rugged limestone. And the view back to Luxor and the Nile from the temple! Well, Queen Hatshepsut knew where to build her palace!

The Ramesseum came later, and then, a little surfeited with such an orgy of sight-seeing, we started home. That was when the day's *coup de théâtre* took place. For as we rode away from the Ramesseum, there before us were the Colossi of Memnon. They are





TEMPLE OF QUEEN HATSHESUT, THEBES



the most memorable monuments at Thebes. I am not sure that they are not more impressive than the Sphinx. There is something unutterably lonely and pathetic, as well as horrible and stupendous, about these two great monsters starting out of the plain.

It was somewhere here that the Right Section Commander bought his scarab. We tried to prevent his doing it; but he had an obsession. It was not an obsession to buy the scarab, so he said, but an obsession to get rid of the man who wanted to sell it. Several of these *antica* scoundrels had followed us at a run from Deir-el-Bahari, proffering their pieces of mummy-case, scarabs, images, and so on, at prices which decreased in direct proportion to the time and distance from the village. The Right Section Commander rode last in our procession, and we others kept getting rid of our importunate merchants by telling them that the gentleman in the rear was a most enthusiastic collector. The result was that the Right Section Commander rode in the midst of a howling mob. In vain he tried to get abreast of us; we hurried on, and the men hung round him like flies. There was one most pressing fellow who wanted to sell a huge scarab about 4 inches long; it would make a good paperweight, we suggested. His first price was thirty piastres, but it descended to one piastre by the tomb of Nakht (I must say something of the tomb of Nakht in a moment). All of us tried to persuade the Right Section Commander that even to receive it as a gift would be to lose caste, and we told him that we refused to let him ride with us carrying it; but he said he could not bear the company of the scarab proprietor any longer, and gave him half a piastre (1½d.). Then we endeavoured to get him to throw the

thing away, lest it degrade us in the sight of all Luxor; but he said he had a relation at home who would believe anything, and insisted on bringing it on. We shunned him thereafter.

I had forgotten to tell of the tomb of Nakht—of Nakht, once artist (so said our guide). His tomb, like those others of the nobility and gentry of the Theban age, shows more liberty of treatment in its art than the somewhat severer Tombs of the Kings. When a King's tomb was decorated, the subjects had to be serious and the execution orthodox. But here we are in a different atmosphere. We superintend our labourers, we watch the women gleaning, we see the corn winnowed and measured—just as it is to-day, three thousand years later. We sit at dinner, while women make music, and our cat runs off with a bit of fish. We spear fish and catch wild-fowl; we sacrifice to the gods. It is a vivid, faithful record of Theban daily life, the colours fresh as the subjects; it is a little remnant of a forgotten age, this tomb of Nakht, once artist.

Last in our pilgrimage came the Tombs of the Queens and the incomparable temples of Medinet Habu. Here again, in the Queens' tombs, the artistic atmosphere is different from that in the Tombs of the Kings. Female figures predominate; we have slender brown girls playing draughts, holding the hands of goddesses, worshipping. Over the lower entrance is a divinely graceful goddess with outstretched wings. We come close to those delicate-featured old-time women—Queens, Princesses; the royal Titi; the beloved Nefertari (worthy to be ranked for loveliness with the Princess Nofrit of a still more ancient age). We pass amid beauty down to death. Poor beautiful dead Queens! surely those hideous mummies were never your slim bodies? But

we have your grace and sweetness, written for ever on the walls of your tombs.

In Medinet Habu lurked the ringdove, and there we laid us down and rested in the midday heat. We had passed in three days through the temples of ages; our minds and souls were heavy with their burden. I lay back in the throbbing heat and tried to arrange my thoughts and feelings, to bring to coherence all that welter of ancient beauty and worship. And all my soul would say to me was the song of the ringdove who sang continually her Persian call of "Where?" . . . Where were they all? Where was the glory? Where would we ourselves be in a little?

"Coo, coo, coo! Coo, coo, coo!"

"We've just time to get back to lunch," observed the Senior Subaltern, looking at his watch; "I wouldn't miss the hotel lunch for anything."

The Treasurer looked up from some notes.

"The whole thing," he said, "will only come to about a fiver apiece—fares, hotel bills, guide, donkeys, and all. I call that damned cheap."

As I passed out through the Pavilion of Rameses III. and before the dog-headed goddess Sekhmet, I faintly heard a soft call from behind me:

"Coo, coo, coo! Coo, coo, coo!"

## NORTHWARD HO!

"Here we go up, up, up!

Here we come down, down, down!"

*Children's Rhyme.*

*Middle of May, 1916.*

The day had come.

Again our whole aggregation of men, horses, guns, waggons, and etceteras, was being painfully pushed,

pulled, and generally inveigled on to a train—on to two trains in this case, thank God!—in the heat of an Upper Egypt May morning. And it certainly was hot. It is difficult to judge of comparative heat when you are working in it, and we made no comment; but, if we had only known it, we were moving in the midst of a heat-wave. During the three days of our journeying and settling in, the thermometer reached  $118^{\circ}$  in the shade, even so far north as the Suez Canal. But this we did not know—till afterwards. Pending accurate information, we merely thought it was in the nature of things, and cursed the nature of things.

I was in charge of the first train, and, after an exciting last moment's arrival of the officers' food (for which I got a friendly R.T.O. to delay the train ten minutes) we steamed off about 11 a.m.

O Lord! the heat! We sat and sweated. The flies settled on us. Our chatties of water grew warm, their contents became sickly to the taste. There was no health in us.

Then we reached Assiut. Assiut will remain, to us who travelled to the north that day, a place for ever blessed. Assiut will rank with Jerusalem, and Mecca, and Rome, and Athens, and Salt Lake City—a place to be pilgrimaged to as a centre of devotion. And the sign and symbol of our Assiut cult, the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace of Assiut, will be—an omelette. For it was an omelette (six omelettes, to be precise) which saved our lives that day. Before the advent of those omelettes we were gasping and despairing men. After them we were ready to confront heat, train journeys, dust—the whole world.

It came about like this.

I had gone down to the hydrant at the end of the

platform where our engine was drinking, in order to have the stream of water turned over my head and shoulders. (Delicious! Paradise!) When clearing myself of as much superfluous water as I could, I heard the voice of the Senior Subaltern from the other platform:

“ I say—*I say!* One can get an omelette here. And iced Schweppe’s soda and limejuice.”

I went.

There were three of us—three wanderers in that torrid and merciless land, three exhausted pilgrims in that howling wilderness. And we were stayed with omelettes and comforted with soda. Six omelettes and nine sodas. And we returned to the train, after basking in the breezy shade of that outdoor restaurant, as giants refreshed with iced champagne-cup.

Blessed be Assiut of the Egyptians, which maketh omelettes to gladden the heart of man!

The men, too, had refreshed mind and body in their own way, and we were a more cheerful company than started from Sohag when we reached Cairo at dead of night. Cairo, city of mosques and minarets and mystery! of beauty and the great bazaars!

None of that for us. All we saw of Cairo (on this occasion) was a somnolent station and a dark and deserted platform. While we waited, a late train came in over opposite. We looked with envy on the exodus of travellers. Happy creatures! they could wander at will in Cairo. They could see mosques, visit bazaars, inspect the Pyramids, journey to Memphis, whenever they chose; while we were snatched rapidly past this combination of delights to—what? Nothing (we expected) very thrilling or very pleasant.

The ruthless train went on. Sleep came; then wake-

fulness and morning and the familiar landscape of the Delta. Women with audaciously unveiled faces carried shapely water-pitchers on their heads; everywhere was a broad expanse of green fertility; stations were frequent. Then at last we left this, too, behind, and shot into the midst of a barren desert. Tracts of sand stretched away on all sides, unbroken save for a tenuous line of telegraph-poles dwindling into a remote distance, and speaking of civilization somewhere beyond. Soft light-brown sand—heaps and hummocks and endless wastes of it, with here and there the bleaching bones of a camel. It was as though we were on some ship ploughing its way through a fulvous ocean. It was hard to believe any men could have pioneered our lonely course.

Suddenly a belt of trees broke the horizon. Fir-like trees, not palms. A long regular line of them, green and comforting. Nearer, and a road appeared; and then, like a foolish thing in a dream, the funnels and spars of a great steamer passed across the landscape somewhere behind the fir belt.

We had reached our new home. And there, swelling out of the distant desert like a dusky breast, dimly rose the hill by which, a few weeks before, the Turks and ourselves had met in fierce encounter. . . .



## SINAI

### A NIGHT MARCH IN THE DESERT

“Oft in the stilly night. . . .”—T. MOORE.

*End of June, 1916.*

It is midnight. A thin sickle of a moon hangs in the eastern heavens, just above a splendid star. These two dim the magnificence of the rest of the sky, as the presence of a loved one eclipses the presence of mere beauty. The desert is a silver sea studded with dark islets, an ocean of mystery. Far on the western horizon (in reality quite close to) runs the silhouetted edge of a black line of trees.

There is an unaccustomed stir in camp. Subdued voices sound amid the hushed rustle and clank of harness and the bustle of moving men and horses. Here and there, strictly against orders, the gleam of a lantern in a tent may be seen. As the Senior Subaltern puts it, there is a sort of air of the Burial of Sir John Moore about.

But we are not going to bury anyone. One section of the Battery is about to carry out a practice night march. At any moment we may have to negotiate the real thing against “Johnny Turk,” and night marches in deserts are tricky things. The C.O. has been what is vulgarly termed by the subalterns “swotting it up” for the last day or two. This consists in trial trips by day; long poring over maps; efforts at resection; the

damning of triangles of error; and many conversations with those who have "been there before." The result of these last is scarcely encouraging. There are many bogs about, there are few landmarks; and marching on stars, through mixed salt marshes and sand, is generally held to be "little catch."

"Poor devils!" says the C.O. of the neighbouring Battery, dropping into the Mess at 8 p.m. on the night of the episode. "Poor devils! When do you start?"

Being informed, he proceeds:

"I suppose you know that they lost three horses in bogs last time they did it?"

Interval for rumination.

"Poor devils!"

"Bet you we get there," sanguinely remarks our C.O.

"How are you going to do it?"

"Oh, we start marching on bearing 220 till we reach some telegraph-poles; then we follow them a mile and a half until we come to a rise in the ground, where Ballah light bears 152; then we turn and march on bearing 266 till we come to the edge of a bog, skirt that to a point opposite where we struck it, where Ballah bears 132; leave Ballah dead behind and go on till we come to another bog; keep to the north until Ballah bears 132, and then strike west until we hit the fresh-water canal at a point where Ballah bears 130."

"Sounds simple," says the other C.O. "I shouldn't do an easy march like that the first time; you won't get the right feel of the thing. And mind you put up a light in camp to take a back bearing on. I did, and marched six miles taking bearings on it before I found that it was my horseholder's cigarette end. Well, well! we'll come and help pull you out to-morrow. Night-night."

“Pessimist!” murmured the C.O., and goes to bed for three hours’ sleep.

“No lights, no noise”—that was the order. And almost noiselessly the Battery, or rather the section, assembled. It is not easy to tell who is who in the dark, and some of the whispers assumed a rather raspy note; but in the end the Senior Subaltern reported:

“All present and ready, sir,” and we moved off.

The Staff were sent on. Then came the C.O. and the Senior Subaltern, then the section, with teams of twelve horses (four abreast) for each vehicle, and also spare teams of twelve for each, the gunners riding the spare gun teams. Last came the Captain and the Junior Subaltern.

On these occasions it is necessary almost literally to “hitch your waggon to a star.” The C.O. selected a plump and respectable star, and told the N.C.O.’s in charge of the Staff never to lose sight of it or of each other. They went over some queer ground, but they carried out their orders.

Behold us, then, crawling over the desert in the pale moonlight, a strange blurry black snake with a broad head. From the heels of each of the single horses in front goes up a silver, phosphorescent-like trail of sand. Farther back, the teams and vehicles raise a denser shimmering cloud. But even in the moonlight from a few hundred yards away we are invisible.

Yet, doubtless, not inaudible. For it is the ear, not the eye, that is perhaps the chiefest enemy by night. Far across the still desert the clink of a chain or the grate of a tyre will tell the listening patrol of the approach of an armed force. It is incredible how far and how clearly sounds will carry. The Australians have had, I believe, to give up carrying chains instead of headropes

on account of their danger on night marches. To-night we are too far away from "Jakko" to fear his hearing us, or I fancy the C.O. would be nervous. For, although the men are loyally and splendidly silent, there is a general rustling and groaning and creaking that refuses to be ignored.

Suddenly the Staff stop, and a telegraph-pole looms up. Five minutes' halt, some whispered directions, and we are off again, keeping the poles on our right. But, alas! not for long. After five minutes a horseman gallops up through the darkness and whispers hoarsely to the C.O.

"Halt!" in a sort of whispered shout, and everything comes to a standstill.

The special bar to which the swingletrees are attached (improvised out of a rail and some horseshoes) has bent on one vehicle.

The C.O. rides back. The vehicle must be left, and must follow as best it can. (Little chance of seeing it again.)

On once more. Shuffle, shuffle through the silver sea of sand. The desert is a new and strange place by night. One is always the centre of a circle of sandy nothingness, which one never crosses, because it always advances with one. Shapeless black heaps diversify this nightmare-like circle of monotony, and pass by like things in a dream. One never gets anywhere. The horse in front is always there, kicking up a silver trail of sand; the circle of desert is always there; the shadowy mounds are always there. One falls into a kind of trance. One is voyaging through eternity.

At last we come to the anxiously awaited rise in the ground where we are to turn off on bearing 266. There is a wait while the C.O. takes bearings to Ballah light

and various stars. Then more whispered orders, and our column turns away to the right. More marching, more monotony, more eternity, then a sharp, husky "Halt!"

"Nearly in a bog that time," I murmur to myself. But we skirt it. And now to the west looms up a dim belt of trees. And in the east, slowly, surely, there springs a pale greenish-pink radiance. Half-past three; it is the dawn. No use to us yet though, and we still steer by the stars. But just as we reach our destination the day is there. Lumps of darkness become human forms; there is the Sergeant-Major, the Senior Subaltern, the C.O.—we have completed our night march, and are "ready for the attack" at the psychological moment.

The C.O. is pleased. "You may talk." We do. . . .

Egypt can be very un-Egyptian. The spot in which we found ourselves in the cool of that June morning, just as the orange and purple radiance to the east grew brilliant enough to disclose it to us, might have been Le Touquet or Cromer.

A little thicket of pine-like trees thinned out into a long triple belt, which ran for a quarter of a mile down the banks of the fresh-water canal. The ground beneath the trees was floored 3 inches deep with pine needles which smelt like Paradise. Looking out from the scented shade of the thicket on to the sand-dunes, there came to me a sudden passionate longing—what the Welsh call a *hiraeth*—for "home." I could almost imagine I was looking out over West Runton. Here were the woods of Roman Camp; there, where Ballah lay, would be Cromer itself; and beyond the canal over there, instead of that unending, nightmare sea of sand, would stretch the real sea—the cold, splendid sea that laves the coast of Norfolk. Cromer! West Runton!

Sheringham! Oh, the sweet places! Oh, the sweet, sweet places! Roman Camp in June! The scent of the pines—I could smell it. The joy of an English June!

But then the burning sun arose, and the sand-dunes quivered with heat, and the mirage danced over Ballah, and I was back in Egypt, a tiny cog in a killing machine.

So I went to see the frogs. At least, I did not actually go to see the frogs. I went to wet the felt of my water-bottles in one of the rivulets that irrigated the thicket. But as I sat there and watched the felt soaking up the moisture I became conscious of being watched. And not by one pair of eyes alone. There sitting in a silent and absorbed semicircle were six little green frogs, each with his pair of projecting beady eyes focussed on me with a rapt attention. Somehow I felt like a Gulliver strayed into Lilliput.

The frogs closed in, still staring. One inspected my boot. I threw a berry to him. To my amazement, directly it pitched, about 3 inches from him, he flung himself upon it with fury. I could see his small-toothed jaws snapping viciously. Then he quitted it in disgust. His companions remained wrapped in unmoved and stony regard of me. At last I got the key of their interest. A fly—a great bluebottle creature—settled on my leather legging. At once a frog moved stealthily and swiftly across the pine needles, exactly as a panther would, crawling, not hopping. Then, with incredible suddenness, there was a flight through the air. Something hit my legging, and there was no more fly—only a frog digesting. After that the Junior Subaltern joined me, and we had a sort of “fly-pool,” in which we each backed our frog to catch the first fly. The Junior Subaltern appreciates these childish games. As a matter of fact, although my frog lost in numbers, he

won in weight; indeed, to this day I wonder where he put them.

Even fly-pool palled in time, and we went back under the thick of the pine-trees. Then I lay on my back on the pine-needle carpet and listened to the wind in the trees. The wind in the trees! "A going among the tree-tops." The voice of the earth talking to the sky. The message of the winds to the world. At night the whisper of sleep to the stars. A green, peaceful murmuring, a cool sound in the dusty desert. I looked up, and saw the delicate branches interlacing, and interchanging, and gently caressing each other. The fragrance of their sap came to my nostrils as an exquisite far-away memory to a tired mind. I was out of the heat and the drouth, and there was no more war. I was in a green palace with many windows. A green palace of peace; a green palace of rest; a green palace of forgetfulness. . . .

## THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

"Now the plagues of Egypt are chiefly these:  
Dirt and dust and flies and fleas."

*Middle of May, 1916.*

The plagues of Egypt still exist. Not only do they still exist; they have been added to. As in the days of that great Pharaoh, Rameses II., the Nile still runs red as blood every year when the floods are let loose, and anyone who has seen it then can quite pardon the innocent Israelites who gaped at it as a miracle. Frogs are still sent, probably in rather greater numbers. To judge by the lice, the original emissaries of the Lord have done well since their arrival. Flies—but there,

we'll have another word or two about flies ! The beasts still suffer from the murrain, many murrains; and boils and blains have increased and multiplied. As to hail—there, of course, we have what may be called a plague of occasion; but no doubt it comes now and then. Locusts are to be seen, but not often up to the plague standard in quantity or quality. I have been in a “thick darkness” at noonday—all lights alight to make life possible—during a *khamseen*. As for the first-born, I have no doubt it more often dies than not. The plagues of Egypt have become a habit.

And now there are others. Or perhaps Moses found these others there, and so could not use them as special plagues. There is the heat. There is the dirt. There is the dust. There are the fleas. Unless the ancient Egyptians were dirty and full of fleas, and lived in the midst of dust and intolerable heat, some other prophet since Moses has been doing a bit of plaguing. But probably the ancient Egyptians existed under precisely the conditions I have described.

The heat, perhaps, should not be included in the category of plagues. Some people may like it; though even the native Egyptians keep in the shade and pant and perspire during the summer. It certainly is a plague to us Europeans.

Something has been said earlier as to means of combating the heat. Here are a few more words on the subject. The hotter it gets, the more you must insist on being interested in life. The more you feel like doing nothing, the more you must do something. When you want to die, you must start living hard. Resisting extreme heat is like resisting extreme cold; the one thing to do is not to lie down and give in. I remember riding



up to Headquarters, in the desert, one day when the thermometer was  $116^{\circ}$  in the shade. In a tent I found a perspiring Staff Major at a desk. I did not know him, but he called out: "Come in, old chap, and sit down." Then I asked politely how he was and what he had been doing. "I'm feeling like hell," he told me, "and I've been working like hell since breakfast to forget about this heat." (Only he did not say just "this heat.") He was right; he was doing the best thing to keep cool.

That day I very nearly lost "grip" myself. There comes a time, I think, when anyone tends to lose grip. When it comes depends on the individual and on the circumstances of the moment. That day I had started by being depressed and ill. We had just moved into a new camp the day before, and twenty-four hours of exposure and bad feeding had brought on a touch of fever. The camp had not yet settled down, and discomfort reigned supreme. At eight in the morning, after disposing of my Battery work, I sat in my tent and desired to die. The heat stoked up; had I but known it, that day was about the hottest they ever know in these parts. But I did not know it, and said to myself: "It's probably always like this; you've got to get used to it." So, when I desired more deeply to die, and felt the resigned despondency creeping over me that signifies loss of grip, I administered a spiritual shaking to myself, not realizing fully how I was not quite to blame. Then I ordered my horses, and asked the Adjutant to come to Headquarters with me. Admirable man, he came!

We rode down the canal-bank with the heat beating upon our faces like the air from over a caldron of molten metal.

“Jolly place this!” I remarked. “I suppose one gets to like it in time.”

The Adjutant grunted.

Then we got to the pontoon bridge over the canal—and found one of the pontoons had sunk. The only way over was by a man-handled ferry barge, at present over the other side. I lay in the shadow of a broken piece of bridge and thanked God. It seemed a pretty hard business “keeping grip” to-day. Then the ferry arrived and we went over. By this time we were fairly exhausted, and the sight of an “E.F.” canteen lured us in.

“A drink! anything!”

“Got nothing, sir.”

“Nothing?”

“No minerals, sir.”

“Any lemonade powder?”

“No, sir.”

“Oranges?”

“No, sir.”

“Got *anything*?”

“Some tinned fruit.”

We had a tin of apricots (all there was) opened, and clawed chunks out; then emptied the juice down our throats. The man in charge was most sympathetic, and begged us to do something to help him. “We can’t get the stuff. It can be got—you could get it in half a day privately—but we wire and wire and can’t get it. This fruit will last only a few hours more.”

I amused myself composing a telegram to the Secretary of State for War, signed “Thirsty Officer,” and then regretfully crumpled it up and went in search of water to drink.

This we found near-by, where the thud and snort

of an oil-engine proclaimed a pumping plant. This, indeed, was the plant which sent the tens of thousands of gallons of filtered and medicated water down the pipe line to the troops baking in the desert farther out.

By this time the day was at its hottest. I want to try to induce some realization of what this meant. It was  $116^{\circ}$  in the shade of a tent. My clinical thermometer, when next I came to use it, was bumping up against the top of its tube, far over the most fatal fever heat, showing what one's blood has to put up with in these times. Chocolate kept in the shade became a shapeless jelly-like mass. Putting the hand on an empty teapot, inside the Mess tent, it was apparently full of fresh-made tea—until it was lifted. Metal surfaces—not in the sun, but inside tents—became too hot to touch. The pages of books, left open in tents, curled up. Candles, of course, gave up the unequal struggle, and lay down. It was all inhuman, preposterous.

We entered the engine-house, to be met by two almost naked engineers. Water? Yes, we could have it “fresh from the cow,” as it were. We were led over to the engine, and taught to drink in the latest and most sanitary fashion, the fashion adopted, we were told, at the most recent drinking fountains in Scotland. There was no cup (therein lay the chief sanitary improvement), but only a tiny fountain, turned on by a small cock on the engine. The thin stream of water rose anything from an inch to several feet in the air according as one manipulated the tap. We let ourselves go on this arrangement. First we turned the stream up to 3 inches, and let it play on the back of our thirsty throats. Drinking—that is, actual swallowing—was difficult and messy. But that is another of the

sanitary improvements: one's thirst is satisfied without drinking so much. Then we turned the tap boldly on and twisted our heads round in the fountain. Then we cast sanitary improvements to the wind, turned the stream down to a tiny bubble of water, and grossly closed our mouths over the whole brass nozzle of the cock, letting the stream be pumped down us, and irrigate and swell us out. Then we heaved sighs of satisfaction and went gratefully out.

To the canteen. I had no idea before what a triumph of science and art a tinned cake could be. It sounds dry, but in reality it comes out of the tin as succulent and moist as if it had been baked the same morning. I don't know how it is done. I merely wonder and admire. Biscuits, too—we had biscuits; and then another go at the brass nozzle. No nonsense this time about sanitary improvements. I think the engineer (need I say he was Scotch ?) was a little disappointed.

About this time the desire to die passed from me. It was hot—hotter, if anything, than before; but the crisis was past, my own private, individual crisis. I was not going to lose grip that day.

So we rode out over four miles of desert to Headquarters, agreeing that it might be worse, to find our friend, the Staff Major, also refusing to lose grip in his own way.

That is a slight sketch of the struggle that sometimes comes against the plague of heat. It comes to all men, in all kinds of places and at all sorts of times. And the way to win is to fight.

I think we could all live in tolerable comfort, even in the heat, if that heat were unqualified. But it is qualified by two serious factors—flies and dust. Of these two, the flies are infinitely the worse.

I can scarcely trust myself to write about the flies. One tends to lose control. I have seen men almost go off their heads under the actual infliction of flies. I have heard them address the flies with a concentrated fury of hatred and disgust of which I had never suspected them capable. I have seen others gradually, day by day, give up the struggle and resign themselves to be crawled on. I have felt myself that, if I had an enemy deserving of the uttermost agony and torture, I would desire him to be cursed with flies. And the most horrible, the most maddening part of it is that all the time you hate, and loathe, and rave, the flies are not only generally immune, but also serenely unconscious and uncaring. You cannot communicate your feelings to the fly. Even if you kill it, blasting it with curses as you do so, it merely perishes an innocent and surprised victim of an unknown sudden doom. There is no sense of sin, of just retribution, of defeat. And there are millions more. No; flies are essentially a subject for calm, comprehensive, scientific treatment. That is what they ought to get, and generally don't. We ought to be able to deal with flies, even in Egypt. We fail miserably to do so. All our efforts, even when we make them, are wretched little palliatives, at which the fly, were he actually a vindictive enemy instead of a simple example of a natural law, would justifiably jeer. He beats us. Hopelessly.

He should not beat us. He is not only one of the minor horrors of war; he is one of the major perils of existence. He is a loathsome, scavenging carrier of dirt and disease. He is the embodiment of all that is insanitary. Where the fly is, science and sanitation have failed and are defeated.

Of course, he is the camp follower of filth. Filth is

his habitation, his food, his *raison d'être*. He has his place in the world, and that place is—filth. So long as there is filth there will be flies. And when science and sanitation say, "No more filth," they will also say, "No more flies." Until that day the fly not only will live: he will have a right to live. He is the scavenger of filth; he is Nature's means of dealing with filth. And until Science instead of Nature attends to the business of dealing with filth, the fly will remain, filth's most obedient humble servant.

People's food and noses and eyes and bald heads are only side-issues in a fly's life; his real business is with unutterable disgustingnesses. That is why, when I feel his little tender tentacles tickling my eyelids, I shudder and feel sick. That is why, when, as is a custom with these Oriental flies, he will not go away when flapped at, but darts in persistently and with devilish swiftness until at last he attains my lips, I could shriek with hatred and horror. That is why, when I see him crawling in his battalions over the bread, the meat, the sugar, drowned in the milk, buried alive in the jam, I hate food and cannot eat. That is why, when I see a little native child, its eyes wide open, with a ring of flies crawling round their edges, sucking of their moisture, hanging in their lashes, I feel it with horror and disgust. That is why, when I think of all these things, I could rise up and curse our scientists, who know all and give the world no relief.

They could. America has made in many States such laws as have dealt with the flies. We have not. It is not altogether the scientists' fault, perhaps. Our statesmen are too busy to think about flies. There are no votes in dealing with flies. So flies probably would

not be dealt with even if the scientists would formulate methods for dealing with them.

Even in Egypt flies could be dealt with, if there were men intelligent and great and courageous enough to deal with them. Although some sweeping measure were impossible, although the native could not at once be weaned from filth, the fly cannot cover very much ground—not a great deal over a mile—and areas might be taken in turn and reclaimed. The thing can be done. No plague is incurable.

With the fly would go many great diseases—the bulk of enteric and ophthalmia, to give only two instances. It is worth doing away with.

Dirt and dust are two other conspicuous plagues of Egypt to-day. As to dirt, of course it is almost impossible to inculcate, privately, cleanliness into an average Oriental. That work must be done by education and legislation. It is not done. Therefore the East is dirty. Some day it may be clean, when we have learnt how to govern, or the Orientals have learnt how to govern. Meanwhile we must put up with dirt, and its train of disease, flies, and so on, merely trying to keep out of the way of these things as far as we can. It will be possible to make the native clean, though it may be difficult. Mohammedanism is in many respects a much cleaner religion than Christianity. Indeed, it should not be much more of a struggle, if it is properly stage-managed, to get the native clean than it will be to get our own natives clean.

Dust is partly due to the dirt, and partly to the climate. The sun and the dryness of the air, combined with the habits of the native, certainly do result in a peculiarly evil brand of dust frequently pervading the air. No railway journey can be made without carriage,

passenger, and luggage, becoming saturated with dust. And when the *khamseen* blows—emulate the ostrich.

Fleas are an unpleasant subject, and I will leave them to the imagination. They are with us in Egypt.

Of course there are many other plagues of Egypt—one in particular (said, I believe, to have originated here), which no traveller can overlook and which no statesman should ignore. But this is a delicate subject, and one in regard to which the English can throw no stones, seeing that they fail so signally to set their own house in order. I will say this, however, here: that it is a crying shame and a living scandal that stupid prudishness and criminal cowardice should be allowed to delay relief in regard to an evil which it only needs calm statement and clean comprehension to recognize as one of the chief cankers at the heart of the State. The man who fearlessly strips this subject of humbug and pretence, and deals with it sanely and thoroughly, will earn the eternal gratitude of mankind. It will need a Man—or perhaps a Woman. Not a Prig or a Politician or a Pietist.

### “JOHNNIE TURK”

“Then here’s to you . . .”—RUDYARD KIPLING.

We are at close grips at last.

Our situation is very interesting. Our fighting-ground is historic.

Take a map. If possible, get a map of the Sinai Peninsula; otherwise one of Egypt will have to do. You will see a straight line, drawn as if with a ruler, running from Port Saïd to the Bitter Lakes; then, from the south end of these, another straight line to Suez.



The Canal. About halfway down the first line you will note a place called Kantara, or more properly El Qantara. If you have before you the map of the Suez Canal in Baedeker, you will see, running from El Qantara eastwards, a thin line—"Caravan Route." That caravan route is, and has been for uncounted centuries, the road from Syria to Egypt. It passes near Pelusium, by Romani, past Qatia, to El Arish, and thence to Bir Saba (do you recognize Beersheba in its proper Oriental guise?). Historic names these, either of ancient or modern history. And a truly historic road.

In the beginning (the Bible beginning), Adam and Eve, so the story goes, inhabited a part of Mesopotamia called "the Garden of Eden." It probably wasn't called this at the time (the Bible merely says: "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden"), but that is how it has come down to us. Shortly afterwards Adam and Eve quitted their first home under circumstances too well known to need reciting. The next mention of any place inhabited by Adam or his family is when we are told that Cain "went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden." There he built a city and called it Enoch. (Who inhabited the "city," considering the population of the world at the time consisted of Adam, Eve, Cain and his wife (who was she?), and Enoch—of which number Adam and Eve were absent—I have never been able to imagine.) Anyhow, a city, Enoch, was builded in the land of Nod. After that things went on their way, with a natural increase of population, until the Flood (it is curious that there is a Flood in almost every religion; one is tempted to believe that there really was something of the kind). That washed

things out, literally and metaphorically, and we are left to start again with Noah and his little party.

We start from Ararat, just where the boundaries of Turkey, Persia, and Caucasia, all run together, and with the mention of Babel we get back again to Mesopotamia. And now, after this rather protracted preface (I can't help it; I like starting from beginnings)—now for our caravan road. For Abraham, so we are told, who was the son of Terah, who was descended through fourteen verses of the eleventh chapter of Genesis from Shem, was bidden by the Lord to go forth into the land of Canaan (who had been a son of Ham). Abraham did not, however, remain content with his journey from Ur of the Chaldees to Bethel. He left his cousin's territory, "going on still towards the south." And thus he came to pass over our caravan road to Egypt. Perhaps he halted for the night where I am writing this—he and the fair Sarai. Then occurred that little incident anent the same Sarai which I cannot help thinking showed up Abraham in rather a poor light. For (as you will probably remember), knowing Sarai to be good-looking, and evidently having a shrewd knowledge of the customs of the Egyptians with regard to strangers with fair wives, Abraham persuaded Sarai to say she was his sister, whereon she was taken into Pharaoh's household. I always think Pharaoh behaved very handsomely in this Sarai business. For when the Lord, apparently differing from Abraham in His ideas of what should have been done under the circumstances, "plagued Pharaoh and his household with great plagues because of Sarai, Abraham's wife," all Pharaoh did was mildly to remonstrate with Abraham, "Why saidst thou, She is my sister?" and bid him take her and go his way. Which Abraham wisely did, returning to

Canaan with Lot, where they comfortably divided the land between them, with a blessing from the Almighty.

After this there is a gap in the history of our caravan road. The days of Isaac passed by, and the days of Jacob. Now, Jacob, in the good Old Testament way, took his part in the peopling of the earth. What with four sons by Leah and two sons by Rachel's maid Bilhah, by which sons Rachel achieved a kind of vicarious motherhood, and two sons by Leah's maid Zilpah, and an extra and unpremeditated son by Leah (the reward for a gift of mandrakes from Leah to Rachel), and yet another (sixth son) by Leah, and a final daughter by Leah, he had done his share. But then Rachel, who had long given up hope of any but the said vicarious motherhood through her maid, achieved actual maternity, and there came Joseph. And although she also bore Benjamin later, it was through Joseph that she added to the history of our caravan road.

The story is too familiar to tell again. The casting into the pit at Dothan (north-west of the Dead Sea); the selling for twenty pieces of silver to the Midianite merchantmen, "with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt"; the second selling by the Midianites "unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard"—of all these any school-child knows. And so Joseph was haled past El Arish, by Bir el Abd, through Qatia and Romani and El Qantara, to service in Egypt, to rise in dignity and honour; to pass through his quixotic adventure with Potiphar's wife, to be thrown into prison; to leap into fame as a dream-reader; to enter the Court of the great Pharaoh, Rameses II.; to stand, at thirty years of age, the favoured Vizier of all Egypt.

Then came all his brothers save one over our caravan

road (surely some of these many travellers rested where I rest?), to their memorable and somewhat humiliating reunion with Joseph. And after that, all but Simeon fared back over this desert way to fetch Benjamin; travelling again to Egypt fearfully along the camel-path; drinking brackish water, eating dry dates; trembling in their heart to meet again the great ruler, whom they knew not to be their brother, whom they suspected of some subtle plot against their lives. Oh, I can see them, labouring, sick of heart, plodding those weary miles. To Egypt. To Joseph. To happiness.

Last of all comes the old father, Jacob, led by his sons back over our caravan road to see his darling Joseph. A long, hard road for an old man. Yet not the last time he shall travel it. For after seventeen years, seventeen years of peaceful life with the great Governor of Egypt to whom he had given birth, "he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost," and his embalmed body was taken, with "a very great company," back over the caravan road to the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre.

Joseph died in Egypt, and was put in a coffin there. But he straitly enjoined the children of Israel that, when they left Egypt—and leave they should, said he—they should carry up his bones thence. Moses fulfilled the oath they took, and Joseph's mummy was taken with the Israelites over all their wanderings, till it was at last laid to rest in Shechem of Canaan.

But it did not pass over our caravan road. What possessed the Israelites not to use the familiar route, by which they could have been in Syria in a week or so, but to spend forty years wandering about such hopeless places as the Sinai Peninsula and the deserts beyond Canaan, I cannot imagine. Possibly the close pursuit

of Pharaoh and his chariots may have had something to do with it; for they fled a good deal to the southward, and crossed the Red Sea—or what may have been part of the Red Sea—somewhere beyond Ismailia. It is interesting to observe that Pharaoh, like ourselves to-day, had trouble with his wheels in the sand. His chariots, like our guns, “drave heavily”; and Pharaoh had never heard of pedrails. I suppose the truth about the passage of the Red Sea was that the Israelites got over while the tide was down, and Pharaoh, pursuing, was caught and overwhelmed. This shows a sad lack of good staff work in the Intelligence Department of the Egyptian Army of that day.

Anyhow, after getting safely across the Red Sea, the Israelites took entirely the wrong turning, and, instead of striking straight across by a quite fair route (via Nekhl) to Syria, or making north to join our old friend the Qantara-Bir Saba road, they strayed hopelessly and aimlessly to the southward. I do not wonder that Moses had to face some grumbling. Or that water and food were short, and disease rife, and fiery serpents prevalent. What I marvel at is that any expedition could live and move and have its being at all over the route of the Israelites. How many really were they, I wonder? How did they run their transport? What was their commissariat? What was manna? Where did the quails come from?

Sometimes I long for a Moses on the General Staff.

Well, let us pass over some centuries.

In A.D. 0 (or is it A.D. 1?) a baby was born to the wife of a certain carpenter in Judæa. And hearing, or being warned, that the King contemplated massacring all the babies in Judæa who were under two years old, the carpenter forthwith fled along the caravan road

from Bir Saba to Egypt with his wife and child. And so the infant Jesus went this journey of ours, and returned, too, by the same path when Herod was dead. The Virgin Mary slept, maybe, beneath the palm-trees of Romani, and the little hands played with dates from the groves of Qatia.

Another eighteen hundred years pass. The old road is still there, as it was in Abraham's time; but now a mightier man than even Abraham marches down it. Napoleon. Two divisions he brought to fight. And when they complained of heat and lack of water, he, marching at their head—on foot a deal of the time—told them to put petticoats on if they wanted to behave like women. They got through and fought, did those two divisions. What marvel that means, he knows who has seen the road. But Napoleon worked miracles. Napoleon was a miracle.

Such has been our caravan road. To-day it has broken with its past. Over all the centuries it was a camel-pad in the sand, a track worn just a little deeper, beaten just a little harder, than the surrounding desert. Dotted at stages along the hot yellow path came the relief of green palms and the solace of brackish water—the *birs* or *hods* of El Arish, Salmama, Bir el Abd, Qatia, Romani. Between these oases was nothing but fiery sand and wizened scrub.

The traffic of the road is, too, very different from the peaceful, unhurried caravans which used it over those thousands of years that are gone. Different even from the swift-moving, light-going divisions that Napoleon brought. For along the paved surface of a road rumble huge lorries; along the rails rush truckloads of stores; down the desert move great companies of men and horses. Up to a certain point. Then, between the

two opposing organizations, comes a tract of the old desert, of the old caravan road, untouched and unaltered by this modern fiend of war; straying quietly and unobtrusively across, past *bir* and *hod*, to the other flood of killing-preparation. Somewhere in this old-time tract our new battle is to be fought. For the time has arrived; action is at hand; the Turk is coming.

It all happened very suddenly. We had moved some miles into the desert up the artery of the road that follows the old caravan track, and, one night soon after we were settled in, I had just got to sleep. The Right Section Commander had been regaling the somnolent camp with a rendering of his own, in a slightly brackish voice, of some of those music-hall popularities which pass for music among so many Englishmen. This offensive having been checked by an overwhelming fire of remarks from all quarters, the camp proceeded to its normal 9 p.m. occupation of sleep—and I with it.

At 10.10 p.m. (or 22.10 in our new and more sensible system of recording time) I was awakened by someone coming to the opening of my tent.

“What is it?”

I was handed an official message envelope.

I turned on my electric torch and read, with half-awake eyes. They soon opened. The Turks, I was told, had been located in great numbers at places far in advance of their base, a long way down the caravan road—not more, in fact, than a score or so of miles from where I was lying. They were entrenched, and obviously preparing to advance. My C.R.A. had gone forward. I was to place myself under the orders of the General of the Mounted Brigade where I was. I was to go over and report to him at once. I was to be

ready to march at 4 a.m. next morning. "Good luck" the message ended.

No more sleep that night. Only the day before our pedrails—great wooden and chain feet for walking guns over the sand—had arrived, and all through the dark hours there was the clank of the fitters putting them on the vehicles. ("The village blacksmith at work," as Harrow irreverently expressed it.) But we did not march that night. Nor the next day. Nor the next.

The Turk came steadily on. With amazing method and deliberation, and a care and forethought that showed him inspired by German brains, he marched forward, occupying and entrenching position after position, dragging on his guns—even great guns of position—building brushwood roads over the desert, constructing redoubts and shelters. It was a great and wonderful advance. And it was all according to programme—*our* programme. So we waited, and waited, and waited.

The Turk came to Oghratina, where a few months before he had dealt hardly with our yeomanry. He came past Oghratina. Then my Battery was sent for—at an hour's notice. In the early dawn of a late July day we marched forward to Romani. Hot and weary we arrived six hours later, an hour before we were expected. But we were *there*. The Turk was almost within gun-fire.

And then we waited again. One day. Two days. Still the Turk came on, building, digging, strengthening. On the third day we were allowed to have a shot at him. Two days before we had been visited by some enemy planes, and sustained our first casualty (of which more in a little). We were inclined to hit back. It is dull and irritating work lying down to be bombed, without



the chance of firing in return. So we went forth joyfully.

Out under the smooth yellow crest of Katib Gannit we marched rattling along, with our pedrails making a noise like dozens of machine guns in action. Down across the scrub-speckled desert into Qatia, there to meet the General of our new Brigade.

He and I rode out to the old Qatia battle-field to reconnoitre. Our ride made me shudder. A battle-field must always be shudderful. This was a peculiar one. The Turks had been left in possession, the dead had been buried, and little crosses showed their number. But the horses lay in long withered heaps, just where they had been shot in their picketing lines (it had been a surprise). They were now dry, almost smell-less things, with the scorched flesh and skin peeling off their skulls and bones. And there were other relics, odd, pathetic evidences of the sudden and murderous and fatal onslaught. The site of the tents was shown by tins, and fragments of clothing, and notebooks and papers. A topee lay derelict and decaying. A pack of cards was scattered here and there. It was not difficult to construct the scene: the peaceful camp, the quick alarm, the desperate resistance, the eventual doom. It was all strangely and horribly easy. The place was full of dead and of their ghosts and memories.

From this battle-field I observed while I shelled the Turkish lines. It was all ridiculously simple and safe. We stood on a crest three or four thousand yards away and piled high explosive on a plainly visible redoubt. From a helio in the Australian front line came occasional messages of correction or congratulation, ending with "Good shot."

Then I turned on another redoubt or emplacement, and lastly on a line of trenches.

During all this time there was no answer from the Turks; no attempt to locate us; no effort to shell us. Only, when we turned from the first target, they quickly got their heads up and machine-gunned some Australians who were boldly spectating near-by.

That was all.

“Like a shooting-gallery, wasn’t it?” someone jocularly remarked as we went plodding home.

I did not laugh. There was much more to come. After all, two can play a waiting game.

Next morning the Turk held Qatia.

## THE FIRST CASUALTY

We had only come in the night before. The camp was a dump of baggage. Only a tent here and there had risen from the débris, like sparse mushrooms. The Officers’ Mess consisted of a heap of stores, a couple of shapeless white bundles, a trestle table covered with breakfast things, and some up-turned boxes for seats.

The C.O. had just finished giving us his usual breakfast résumé of the situation as it presented itself to him. This happens during the porridge. The bacon was appearing, when about 700 yards to the north there was a cloud of black smoke and—“Cramp!”

I looked at it. Six-inch shell, I said to myself, a little surprised; for we hadn’t known of any six-inch guns, though we suspected them. Just as I was thinking this—“Swish-sh-sh-sh-sh-sh-sh! *Cramp!*” and another cloud of black smoke halfway between us and the first. Then I knew what it was. There was no

time to do much. The next would be on or near us. I jumped up.

“Get down! Lie down!” I shouted over to the men’s tents, where they were all clustering round breakfasts. And I threw myself flat on my face. Then I turned to look up. Yes, there he was, straight overhead. And at the same moment once again—“Swish-sh-sh-sh-sh!” . . .

During that interminable period in which a heavy body was whistling down from the aeroplane overhead, I had time to think quite a lot. Of course I thought the bomb was coming straight for the middle of my back. One always does. Then I thought of the line of the other two bombs. Yes, it was dead on us. Then I thought of the wind, blowing from the north-west. But it blew the same for the others. No! It would come . . . “Sh-sh! CRAMP!”

I got up.

The next one would fall farther on. The cloud of black smoke puffed up, this time from just beyond the men’s cookhouse.

“Get to the horse lines!” I yelled. “Take the horses and scatter! He may come back.”

And indeed he did come back.

The tiny speck up above wheeled about gracefully, like some silver gnat in the blue. Then he came steadily, slowly, over us. He seemed to hover. I swear he did. I looked up expectant. I listened. But there was no “swish-sh-sh!” For an endless age he was above us. Then he was clearly past us. And then—“Cramp! cramp! cramp!” and great puffs of black smoke from down by railhead.

After that, silence, and our silver gnat had disappeared into space.

A long whistle, and from their dispersed stations the men came slowly in. Battery life was the same again. But not quite yet. For two men came hurrying up, supporting between them another.

“ ’E’s ’it, sir,” they panted. “ Be’ind, sir !”

A splinter from one of the bombs had gone through his breeches and just scratched him on the back of the thigh. Shock more than injury had made him go under for the moment. When we left him in the shade of a tent, after dressing the place, he went off to show his wound round.

But he was our first casualty.

And he will get a gold stripe on his left sleeve.

## ROMANI

“ Across the sands of Egypt,  
The listening sands of Egypt,  
Moon-glistening sands of Egypt  
He comes at last to fight.”

The Turk had occupied Qatia the night before. That brought him to our front door. He was within gun-fire of my little green tent. From the billowing crests of sand in front of camp his legions were in clear sight. No further advance was possible, save to attack. We had “ let the Turk come on.” He was here. What was the next move ?

During the day there was a tense and silent suspension of actual hostilities. We were watching. He was preparing. It might be to-morrow he would strike; it might not be for several days. General opinion inclined to the idea that he would spend a few days digging himself in, and then deliver his assault. But the Australians left nothing to chance.

During the day I went on a reconnaissance with the heads of the Staff, all down our south-western front. This reconnaissance was to select posts for our advanced line, and to determine artillery positions in defence. A good way back, perhaps—very near camp; but this was the line.

And now I must describe Romani.

Imagine a wide undulating patch of desert. The sand is very soft and fine and yellow, and runs into ridges and hummocks covered with sparse scrub. Occasionally it heaves up into great hills of clean pure sand—huge slowly-shifting mountain mounds, looking for all the world like immense yellow snowdrifts. These are shaped into shoulders of sloping sand to the leeward or southern side, and have sheer drops of a score of feet of steep sand to windward. The top of them is like the edge of a cricket bat, held sideways.

The range of these huge mounds runs along the north-east and south-east boundary of Romani Camp. The mounds do not fence in the camp, because they run longwise to its limits, leaving valleys which lead out of the camp into the plain. But, centring on the swelling summit of Katib Gannit, they form a fine natural defence on the eastward side of Romani.

From the northern end of these sand-ridges to the sea are other defences. From their southern end there runs north-west a high range of sandhills culminating in a peak which is called to-day Mount Royston. From this range to camp is a matter of two to three miles, and almost from its slopes to camp, a little inside the outer line of sandhills first mentioned, runs a high scrub-covered ridge. This is Wellington Ridge. It is only a few hundred yards from the nearest tents at its closest point.

It was this area of camp, inside the natural defences I have told of, that the Turk had to attack and we had to defend. It was here that we awaited him on the evening of August 3, 1916, the outpost line of the Anzac Mounted Division holding the line we had reconnoitred that morning.

The Turk did not delay. By next morning light he held, not only the line we had ridden over the previous day, not only the gun positions I had reconnoitred, but the slopes of Wellington Ridge itself. He could look down into our camp. To his tired and long-expectant eyes there was unfolded the vista of a tent-dotted expanse, full of promise, full of loot. It was only a few paltry hundreds of yards away. Could he push through? He attacked directly from the east, and his heavy guns shelled our forts, lookout posts, and redoubts. He attacked—and this was his true menace—the south-eastern flank, and pushed his infantry strenuously on, up the valleys parallel to the Royston range, on to Wellington Ridge itself. Thus he hoped to turn our right flank and come in upon camp. His mountain guns pressed home this attack on our retiring cavalry. His great guns thundered on to camp itself. His aeroplanes circled overhead and bombed troops, tents, forts, all targets they could find. On and on he came, till his smaller guns could shell our camp itself, and his bullets whistled past our tents. The promised land was very near.

The night before I had gone to bed quite ready to be rudely roused, though not unprepared for a quiet night while the Turk dug in at Qatia. At half-past two on the morning of August 4 an orderly rode up and woke me. His message was that the Turks were attacking in considerable numbers between Hod el Enna and

Mount Meredith—that is, on the line I had ridden down the day before—and he brought me orders to stand to and get all prepared to move, except the actual harnessing up. I watered and fed the horses, and waited.

Standing out on the mound behind my tent, I was well apprised that a battle was in progress. The still night air was rent with continual and heavy firing to the south-east. A sound as of the tearing of cloth showed when a machine gun was at work, while the sharp “pip-pop ! pip-pop !” of the rifles was incessant and ominous.

And there, plainly visible, were the sharp, scintillating flashes of the firearms, cutting the darkness in a hundred places.

What was going on ? When should we be wanted ?

Sleep was out of the question. I waited. We all waited.

At half-past four, just as it became light, we got our orders to move out. I left the Battery to follow, and rode on with the C.R.A.

It was obvious that we were being pushed back, and pushed back quickly. We had ridden not many hundred yards, when we came on a great mass of horses clustered under a high sand-dune—the concentration point of a Brigade. At the same time we saw our cavalry retiring rapidly over the ridge in front of us—Wellington Ridge—and the first few bullets flew singing over our heads.

Meanwhile the Battery came on its way under the most uncomfortable conditions. Three enemy aeroplanes, which obviously had orders to prevent and hinder all movements of troops as much as possible, flew round and round over their heads and rained bombs on them. By almost a miracle no one was hurt, but one

man had his topec blown off. So, under bomb-fire and with occasional bullets flying by, the Battery moved on into the hollow behind us. And by now had begun the earthquaking, shattering sound of heavy crumps falling in camp itself. So they *had* brought up "Artful Abdul," and possibly "Angry Aziz" as well—brought them foot by foot, with labour and pain, all over the weary desert. Well, this was their joy-day!

Things were getting a bit hot. Still we retired; still the Turk came on. And now slow-moving parties of infantry, that we had passed marching up, began to arrive and lie down in the hollows in rear.

The great mass of horses was still there when I got permission to find a position for my Battery and open on the advancing Turks; but when next I looked it had gone. Still the dribblets of our cavalry kept coming back over the ridge. I saw I must be quick. No other Battery had yet arrived. No sound from any gun of ours had been heard. We ourselves were to fire the first round of gun-fire in the Battle of Romani.

Giving the signal to the Battery to follow me, I galloped back round a shoulder of sandhill and looked for a place to observe from. Bullets were now more frequent. The more distant ones went "whe-e-ew!" the nearer ones, "cheep!" the very close ones, "sprrt!" while when they hit the ground they made a sort of "thup!" and a little whiff of sand flew up. I was not conscious of feeling frightened, there was too much to do; but I certainly felt excited and a bit "upset," though this did not prevent my thinking clearly. I was impatient, and no doubt anxious; but I saw vividly what to do. Nerves which are on edge, as nerves, I think, under such conditions must tend to be, lead to an eager desire for action, the denying of which leads



in its turn to an increased nervous tension. Consequently, never in one's life do things appear to go forward more slowly than on such occasions, and one becomes cross. I did. I know I did. But in a little I saw trying to hurry matters did little good, and I made myself refrain. After which I was much calmer. But, good Lord ! there is a bit of a strain on the nerves and temper.

As a matter of fact, the Battery behaved splendidly and worked nobly. They got into position behind me, and, with a curious sense of unreality, I heard myself giving out Battery angles, angles of sight, ranges, and so on, just as if it had been gun-drill. Of course it could have been no otherwise; but it seemed strange to me. Here I was putting into actual use, against a real live enemy, all those formulæ I had repeated so many hundred times on barrack squares and in peaceful green fields. Would they work, with the bullets flicking about and the enemy advancing ? I felt no personal animus against the Turks, I remember—no patriotic fervour; only an intense desire to practise my craft well, and an urgent wish to stop the oncoming danger. For our own tents were not many hundred yards behind, and others were actually at our side. And—we *could* not be beaten. This must end. These men, moving always backwards, must stop, must move forwards.

Thus I thought. And then I opened fire.

We did not start on Wellington Ridge, from which we were now withdrawing altogether, but on which some of our own men still held out. We commenced on Mount Meredith, on whose clean-cut ridge, a mile and a half away, I could just see little black heads jutting over the skyline.

The first Turks I had seen ! Up till now the Turk

had been a mysterious digger of trenches which we could just see; a steady and inexorable advancer over tracts we had ourselves trod; a powerful and insistent force which sent men flying back to us over the ridges, and bullets flying into us from the ridges beyond.

But always unseen. Always producing effect, but always invisible.

And now here he was, Johnnie Turk, a lot of ridiculous little dots on a skyline. I gave the order: "Fire!" and in a moment from behind me there came a tremendous bang, and the first British gun in the battle had been fired. Meanwhile the Turkish shrapnel flecked the blue sky with delightful little fleecy clouds. Only "pip-squeaks," these, though, and we were unaffected. A little later (or were they already at it?) the enemy's four-inch guns got to work. And they are not so nice.

I waited, glasses to my eyes, for the result of that first round. Nothing!

I dropped 300 yards and fired again. Like a conjuring trick the little line of heads was gone, and there below where they had been was the burst of my round, kicking up a lovely spout of yellow sand.

Splendid!

Then we got to work. We shelled the edge of the ridge, and down the ridge, and up the ridge, and beyond the ridge. Afterwards, those who went to see told me there were seventy dead along that ridge.

But our men still fell back. Wellington Ridge was occupied by the Turk. He held Royston. He was to the east, to the south-east, to the south. And still he came on.

Far under the Royston range he was getting a bit round our flank, so I left the Right Section Commander to continue on Mount Meredith, and took one section

and ranged it on the ridges and *hods* up which the Turk was advancing.

Then I returned, and as we were still moving back, and things on Wellington Ridge were getting hot, I took the other section, and retired it to a position whence I could shell the ridge, by this time wholly in Turkish hands.

My two sections were now in satisfactory and fairly safe positions, and I kept them there practically all day. What was better, reports from the Welsh Fusiliers, who had gone out in front of us, were quite excellent. Our fire was effective; the Turk had ceased advancing. We were making him keep his head down. They were delightfully grateful, our Welshmen. They made me have tea and biscuits. They even offered beer! But it was only about breakfast-time, and I thanked them and said "No."

But the tea and biscuits! Oh, Lord! they were good! I had had no breakfast, and since dawn had gone through, for the first time, the anxious experience of fighting a Battery in the face of the enemy. I was famished, and poured tea into myself, and stodged biscuits and chocolate and tabloids—anything. I remember I had a desperately blistered lip, due to long hours in the sun, which sadly mitigated, but was utterly unavailing to destroy, the exquisite, if merely carnal, pleasure of eating.

Meanwhile the section just by me kept up at a range of about 1,600 yards a steady rain of shrapnel, bursting at a beautifully regular height, on Wellington Ridge. Now and again I would send down a biscuit-flavoured alteration in correction when the bursts seemed to heighten a little. And still the Welsh Fusiliers were happy; so we were told by little parties that came back

for food or ammunition. And still Johnnie Turk kept his head down. But he did not go away. Vaguely and somehow impersonally I wondered how it would all end. It seemed so strange. What, exactly, made the difference between going forward and going back? Why should not those Turks keep coming forward? Why could not our men advance? Surely something must happen. It was these little individual men, each behind a tump of sand, that made "the line." What would move it, and which way? Was it just endurance, or morale? Or how was it done—could it be done?

Anyway, we kept on firing, and the bullets zipped about, and one shell burst just short of us, and the Captain nearly met his end. And the day wore on—so slowly, so incredibly slowly.

After a little time I went over to see how the other section, which I had left to "carry on" in the Mount Royston district, was doing. I found the Right Section Commander pleased as Punch, and firing away far too much ammunition. True, it was tempting. The Australians were inciting us to pepper the gullies and *hods* where the Turks were lurking, and it was a sight to cheer a gunner's heart to see the shell bursting beautifully over them. Now and then one actually caught sight of a tiny figure moving across the scrub-dotted ground. Oh yes! they were there all right. A helio from a distant sandhill winked encouragement:

"Fifty yards short."

"One hundred right."

"O.K."

And so on.

Now and then there was the "zipp!" or "whe-ew!" of a bullet past us; but interest in things that were

happening forbade even a prudently recumbent attitude.

Matters seemed at somewhat of a deadlock. To our front, south-westward, the Turks held Wellington Ridge, and could not be dislodged. To our flank, almost due westward, he was covering the ground between us and the Royston range, and clung there like a leech. We peppered on, but more sparingly; for the ammunition question had to be considered, and no actual attack was in progress.

Suddenly an idea seized me. Right under Royston was a great hollow; of what depth and width one could not tell.

*"No. 1 gun 2 degrees more left. Add 1,000."*

I waited for the shot—and saw!

Plump into the hollow went the shell, and, like rabbits, there bolted from it a crowd of midget figures.

*"No. 2 gun 1 degree more left. No. 1 gun 1 degree more right. Both guns 3,500. Two rounds gun-fire."*

Quick as we could we followed them up. But—they went!

Still, it was a happy idea.

Later on the other section was brought down to join its fellow, and now the whole Battery turned on the Royston country.

Then I saw tiny heads all along the distant ridge. "What infernal check!" I thought. "I'll have you off that!"

*"All guns 4 degrees more left. Add 1,200. One round Battery fire."*

Short.

*"Add 200. Repeat."*

Still just short.

*"Add 100 . . ."*

An orderly rode up. As he gave me the envelope he had brought, he said: "The New Zealanders have taken Mount Royston."

"STOP."

That was what the message had to tell me. The deadlock was at an end. From the far south-west, the New Zealand Mounted Brigade, with some English Yeomanry and a R.H.A. Battery, had swept down on the Turk's left flank. They had caught the force which he had put like an encircling arm round our right flank in a still wider embrace. That arm was now cut off. And with the fate of that arm was decided the fate of that whole laborious, painstaking expedition which had worked its way out from Syria; which had achieved such wonders in transport and commissariat and marching; which had plodded on, and toiled valorously, and got within sight, within a few hundred yards, of its chief aim. The Turks were beaten. Their venture had failed.

But not yet had we won our victory. There was a fierce attack on our right just after the good news had reached me, and, seeing it, I quickened fire until it died away. Then we went on steadily firing till dark. For although the Turks on Mount Royston had surrendered, those in the country between Royston and camp still held on; and the enemy had not let go of Wellington Ridge. They were still fighting, steadily and hard, a thousand yards or so from us.

So we retired to camp for the night under the same intermittent "whe-ew!" and "cheep!" and "thup!" of bullets. Retired—that few hundred yards to our tents, that at one time we were not so sure of seeing again! But we had been lucky. One man killed—that was all. And we had fired almost exactly one thousand rounds.

When we reached camp it was dark, and, breaking the peace of night, there were those same scintillating flashes and that same persistent popping of rifles which had started in those early hours of morning which seemed so long ago. But now they were much nearer, for they came from Wellington Ridge. Now and then a stray bullet sang by even among the tents.

And worse was to come. For just as, dog-tired and famished, we had "finished off" the horses, and begun to think of food and rest, from the far eastward there was a dull sound something like a deep "pung!"

I knew what that meant. And in a moment, a couple of hundred yards to the north of us, there was a hideous screeching and then a most appalling "crump!"

"Artful Abdul," I remarked, but without joy.

"Pung!" (in the dim distance). "*Whurra-whurra-whurra-whurra-whurra!*" (crescendo). "Crump!"

Much closer.

Then another, and another, just over us.

Then silence, for ten minutes. After that, more crumps quite close.

Of course, the Turk (or rather the German) knew that the cavalry and infantry would hold the line during the night, and the artillery would go back home. Hence this conduct.

It is not good to remain when some crumping engine is definitely trying to hit you. So I moved men and horses 500 yards into the outworld. From there we heard the enemy shell away through the night with somewhat less troubled minds. But it isn't nice, this crump business at night. There is always a disgustingly long period between the "pung!" in the dim

distance and the screech and "crump!" near to. One wonders.

But it was no use bothering after we had moved; and I put my blankets under a scrub-covered tump of sand, called Tyn-ton to me, and determined to sleep. It was about eleven, and we had to be up at two next morning.

My determination was pretty vain. Tyn-ton could never get used to the occasional "thup!" of a bullet in the sand somewhere near, and would jump up and try to investigate. Then there was a "whe-ew!" now and then that seemed to arrive just as one hoped sleep was coming. And at intervals that were obviously German in their regularity "Artful Abdul" sent a screaming procession of crumps somewhere in the vicinity.

In vain I told myself I was an ass to lose my fitness by not sleeping. The more I did so, the less I slept.

And just as I was reflecting that Tyn-ton had been under bomb-fire, crump-fire, and rifle-fire, and certainly would have a bar to his medal, came réveill  .

### . . . AND AFTERWARDS

"But things like that, you know, must be  
After a famous victory."

SOUTHEY.

Getting up was a stealthy affair. To show a light meant to invite a concentration of long-range rifle-fire from Wellington Ridge. So we hustled the Battery together in the dark. And at about 3.30 a.m. we moved off to our rendezvous, in the starlight of a lovely August morning.



Again we were fated to have no breakfast, for to light a fire would have been quite unpardonable. So I munched some ration biscuit as we silently marched over the desert to the little *bir* at which we were to await orders. Arrived there, we distributed ourselves under the palm-trees so as to escape the vigilance of an early Taube when it got light, and awaited the progress of events.

The Turks still held to Wellington Ridge firmly, and as daylight came the sputtering of the rifles became more intense, while, since we were only about fifteen hundred yards from the ridge, bullets were about. The C.R.A. was lying on the sand-dune which sheltered us to the southward, and when day made observation possible I went up to him and watched the battle.

We could at once see that the Turk's case was hopeless. He had clung to his position through the night; but now his time had come. With our glasses we could plainly see the individual Turks under their tiny hillocks of sand, and they were in a sad plight. For not only were they threatened frontally, from our direction. From the west also our troops were closing in on them, and even from the east they were under fire. Consequently, they knew not from what quarter to seek protection or cover, and we could see them moving desperately round as bullets came from a fresh source. It could not last long.

It did not last long. As we watched, a Turk came out and hoisted something on a stick—some kind of a rude flag. Others followed him. Turks oozed out of their cover all over the ridge. The firing dried up as if by magic. Our troops rushed up the hill. The fight was over.

In a little, dense columns of prisoners were forming on the hill-top. Telling the Battery—or, rather, the

Batteries, for we were in company with another R.H.A. Battery—to follow, we pushed on to the scene of surrender. I was to have my first sight of a battle-field, uncleared, fresh after action.

First we came on the prisoners, sturdy, good-looking fellows most of them; but famished and athirst. Poor devils! I thought. Half a water-bottleful of water distributed among some particularly parched-looking prisoners helped to show my feelings to them; for Arabic produced no impression on them. They were very grateful, smiled thankfully, saluted, and joined the ranks of their comrades, to be marched off under an escort with fixed bayonets. There were several columns of prisoner Turks, and little bunches of stragglers kept coming in. Our infantry were radiant.

At the top of the hill I suddenly came on a trench. In it I saw some Turks. At least, they had been Turks. Rifles, accoutrements, ammunition, were everywhere, and among them these shattered bits of humanity. I did not feel sick; I felt just infinitely pitiful, infinitely disgusted with the world. And this was the line of trenches I had been firing on yesterday.

I gazed on a man lying huddled at my feet, half his skull shot away by shrapnel. “You killed him,” I said softly to myself. Another lay face upwards with a grim set smile. (Death is *not* beautiful; death is *not* peaceful; death is horrible and revolting and awful.) “You killed him,” I said. Yet another was on his side, his head a mass of blood and flies. He was in a scooped depression in the sand, a half-prepared grave. As I looked at this corpse, to my utter horror it slowly and feebly raised a hand, and mechanically tried to brush away the crowding, obscene swarm of flies. I shuddered, and shouted to a Medical Officer near-by:



"IN IT I SAW - MY TURKS"



“ This chap’s alive. Can’t you do anything for him ? ”

The M.O. came up and looked at him sadly.

“ No. He’s practically dead. ”

“ Put a bullet in his head, ” I begged.

But that could not be done.

In that moment on the battle-field of Romani I felt surge up within me a fierce tide of bitterness against a world that could work such things. And then a despairing pity for all of us, blind struggling human beings that blunder on so miserably, each in his own way, towards, no doubt, some distant end. “ Judge not, ” not “ that ye be not judged ” (that is a low and selfish motive), but because no man can tell what allowances should be made.

Still, it is difficult not to judge on a battle-field (or in a slum, for the matter of that).

And a bit of judging does good sometimes. So perhaps judge—but with pity.

The Turk had fled precipitately, and evidence of this was on every hand. Boots, discarded to give greater freedom of movement, lay in all directions. As I went on I passed many fragments of the little bivouac tents which the Turkish officer affects (very sensible, too—light, simple, and a valuable protection against the sun). Round the corner of a small sandhill I came on a sand-bagged gun position, and alongside it one or two complete bivouac tents still standing, and a copper basin in a bag. Empty tins—“ Rindfleisch ” I think—showed where a meal had been made. A half-smoked cigar lay on the sand. It was curious to think that only a few hours before it had been in the mouth of an officer in the Turkish army—a German officer, probably.

And now captured camels began to come in. A string of four belonged to a German officer who (like his fellow-officers) apparently did himself well. Vintage

claret, stores of all kinds, a medicine chest—how he must have missed them! And, captured with this little lot, a veritable German sergeant.

It was all very strange and very cheering.

The cavalry had gone far ahead towards Qatia, and we had to follow lumberingly behind. I am not sure whether I have made quite plain the toil—nay, the almost miracle—it is to get our guns along at all. So it was that through the heat of that torrid day, when water grew tea-hot in our bottles and milk tablets ran into glutinous masses in our haversacks, when our faces peeled and our lips blistered, we followed the cavalry down to Qatia in pursuit of the Turk.

Not without incident, for my Battery, one mile behind our companion Battery, owing to exigencies of watering the horses, temporarily sought shelter under the redoubts on account of rifles and machine guns opening on us from the left as we sallied into the plain. But by the afternoon we were in position on the ridge dominating Qatia, shelling the retreating enemy.

Yet he did not give up Qatia that day. Indeed, the whole of his retreat was a dogged piece of fighting.

That night we were back in camp again, and my Battery stayed there with its Light Horse Brigade for two days. Meanwhile the Turk went steadily back, until he came to a stubborn standstill a bit over twenty miles out at Bir el Abd.

On the evening of August 8 I received, at about 9.30 p.m., an urgent telegram from Headquarters. It told me to move out at once with any escort I could obtain, and push on to a point a few miles short of Bir el Abd by morning. "Great effort required," it wound up.

We set our teeth and "got busy." We moved off soon after 10 p.m. I had ridden over to the Cavalry

Headquarters to obtain an escort; but, as it would take time to get it, I decided to start at once without. We crept out into the Qatia plain, a long black serpent of crawling carriages and horses. We wound along across the sandy ridges and furrows, marching by the stars, until just by Qatia there was a jingle and hustle of horses, and up came our escort. With this protection on our flanks and to our front we pushed on, with ten-minute halts, along the old caravan track, all through the night, until the glimmering dawn showed us the ridges and old battle-field of Oghratina. Five o'clock came, and we were only a few miles away from our rendezvous. But the horses were straining wearily, and the men were silent and half asleep. We had to march about twenty miles, over the intractable and parching desert, before we could be in battle. "Great effort required."

They did it. The horses and the men pulled through, and half an hour before the appointed time every gun and waggon was at the appointed place.

I had ridden on to tell Headquarters that we should be at their disposal at the hour they had laid down. I must say they looked pleased, if not a little surprised.

The horses were watered (with stinking, foul water from a well just quitted by the Turks), and then we moved forward to a depression where a great heap of empty German cartridge cases showed that the enemy guns had been in position. From there I rode forward to the C.R.A. to fix our own position in the battle, which was now in full swing.

I found the C.R.A. pretty well as far forward as it was desirable to go. Things were far hotter than in the Battle of Romani. The Turk was fighting on a narrower front, and he was in position, entrenched, on

the defensive. We were far fewer in number (only our cavalry were up), dispersed, and attacking.

It was straight on Bir el Abd itself that our particular part of the attacking force was focussed. From our observation-station, about 2,000 yards away from the *bir* itself, we could distinctly see the hospital, the dumps of ammunition and stores, and the palm-trees round the wells. In front of Bir el Abd the Turks were pushed well forward; consequently we were only a few hundred yards from their front line. Of course there were bullets, and also the enemy's four-inch guns were at work.

Whether it was the effect of the long night-march, or of being without sleep, or of the increased fire we were under, I do not know; but certainly I did not feel so comfortable—or, perhaps, so little uncomfortable—as at the Battle of Romani. I was a bit nervous as to whether the Turk would not see the Battery coming over a ridge about a thousand yards behind us, in which case his guns would get to work on them pretty quickly. And away to our right flank and to our right rear the Turk was still holding on. To the left, too, he was well up, and we were on a kind of peninsula or tongue, running straight down between enemy country towards Bir el Abd. So there was quite a cross-fire, which was upsetting at times, especially when two snipers, one on each flank, were doing their dirty work at the same time, our observation-station being in their full view.

I confess that just at first I felt a bit distracted in our observation-station. The Turk was, as he fondly believed, shelling it with a combination of high explosive and shrapnel from his four-inch guns. Luckily for us, the shell he thought were effective were really bursting just over our heads, and inflicting most of their damage on a harmless valley behind. Still, not only was the



noise very confusing—one could not get one's orders down easily—but occasional pieces of shell whizzed past with a heavy, buzzing sound, and bullets zipped through the sand. An unhealthyish spot, I thought.

After fixing the Battery position down in a dip near-to, and giving instructions to bring the guns up, I retired behind what seemed to me a most inadequate molehill on the high sandhill whence I was to observe, and waited to give the Battery their angles and so on. Thank goodness no one seemed to notice their coming over the crest behind, though an aeroplane overhead threw out a smoke-ball, which, I think, resulted in some shells near, but not on, the advancing column. However, they got safely into position. There followed a time of trial. The telephone went wrong; I could not get my signals down; I sat on the top of that hill trying to send down angles and cursing. (To have to sit up out of one's scanty cover behind a molehill, and try vainly to send down a Battery angle, may surely be accounted an excuse for some slight swearing?) One of my best telephonists got wounded. Another got wounded. Shells were bursting suspiciously near the Battery. None of the men had had food or sleep. Altogether Fate seemed determined to be hard on us.

And all the time, at regular intervals, over my head there came a series of four ear-splitting crashes and eight beautiful little clouds of smoke—four fleecy white (shrapnel) and four a lovely pink (high explosive)—and at irregular intervals “ whe-ew ! ” “ sprrt ! ” “ thup ! ”

The most evil times have an end, and at last the Battery had got its angles, the telephone was working again, and I was back under my molehill.

Then our fun began. There was a most alluring-looking dump on the right of Bir el Abd, about 2,300

yards away. I ranged on it (putting up some Turks), and then, after hitting it with a percussion shell, put in a high explosive. A minute or so later I saw fire and smoke arising from the dump.

"I've set their dump on fire," I shouted to a Staff Officer not far off. He seemed quite annoyed, saying that we wanted to collar the stuff, not to burn it. In the end, however, my ignorant stroke proved to have been a good one, for we should never have captured that dump.

I kept a gun on the burning stores, and whenever a party of Turks approached it I fired, with effects that were discouraging to them. With my other three guns I turned on the Turkish infantry, who were now attacking resolutely.

One of the strangest things in warfare is the way in which the individual soldiers of the enemy become a series of tiny ant-like figures, absolutely lacking in individuality and indistinguishable one from another. At close quarters a soldier is a man, even if an unfamiliar man; he is tall or short, fat or thin, he has a moustache or is clean-shaven, he is pleasant-looking or the reverse. At a thousand yards he has become a unit, a little black moving midget. He may be a Field-Marshal or a private, that tiny figure whose legs and arms are only just definable; he may be a hero or a coward, a strong man or a weakling. To the man who is trying to kill him he is only an enemy—a Turk, an Englishman. War, the war of to-day, mostly eliminates the personal element—at all events for the gunner; he does not shoot at a man, but at a foe. He does not kill a human being with features and qualities; he hits a target. That is more pleasant for him.

I watched the many little scattered figures moving constantly, consistently forward. They came very



THE TURKISH PRISONERS



deliberately, very laboriously, over the soft sand. Not in long lines or solid masses, of course, but sporadically, in singletons, walking calmly on, and then dropping down behind a mound of sand. So this was an advance, an attack, seen from a spectator's point of view. For although I was firing on them, I was more a spectator than those down there in the front line.

I dropped my range. I increased my rate of fire. After a little they went back, singly, sporadically, those tiny midgets, calmly and slowly trudging through the sand. Once I saw a shell from the Battery on my right burst straight in front of one little figure. When the smoke cleared he was gone. But in a moment he got up again and moved quietly on, limping. They were all going back. The forward movement was at an end everywhere. The attack had been repulsed.

But we could not get forward ourselves. Our right wing was held up. Our left had, in the end, to give way a little. Still we hammered at the centre. All day long I lay on that mound of sand behind my molehill watching the changing fortunes of the day, parched (I had left my water-bottle on my horse), hungry (I had again had no breakfast, lunch, or tea, except for some milk tablets), and weary (no sleep since the day before yesterday). The men were dead-beat, but they fought on splendidly. Leave them alone a minute, and they would fall asleep automatically, where they lay or sat; one had to wake them to work. But when they woke they worked well. We had luck, only four wounded all that day, and I think we deserved it.

Lord! what a day! What a long, long day! My back fried, my elbows scorched, buried in the burning sand so that I could hold my field-glasses to my eyes. Once I laid my glasses down, when we had for the

moment no more ammunition, and let my head droop. In a moment sleep was on me, in spite of the shell bursting overhead and the bullets cheeping past. I felt I could sleep anywhere. But I must not, so back I put my glasses and watched the ever-changing kaleidoscope of the battle.

Time after time the Turk advanced and was repulsed. He lost heavily. But we could not move on. Then, late in the afternoon, it was decided we must give the job up for the day. I got an order to retire, since I was the foremost Battery, and to take up a position in rear to cover the retirement of my companions. I got up and left my molehill (not with any heart-breaking regret), and, sending on my Captain with the Staff Captain to decide our new position, I withdrew the Battery and marched them back up the valley. Poor devils! they thought their labours over for the day. But when I took up the position in rear, and told them that we must open fire again as soon as possible, they wearily pulled themselves together, and did their job with dogged and indomitable spirit.

Even one more effort was called for. We had again to move back, and take up one more position, from which we fired until darkness came, upon the now rapidly advancing Turks. Then, just as I was getting troubled about the position of the Battery, in view of the nearness of the enemy, came the order to retire. To Dababis, some two or three miles back.

It was like a curious dream. One's senses had become blunted even to fatigue. One felt in the grip of some ceaselessly turning machine, which went on and on . . . and on and on . . . and on and on. . . . It was hard to remember when one had started, when one had had sleep or food.

We reached Dababis. There we were told we should have to go back farther to Oghratina at 10 p.m. The nightmare feeling became intensified.

We watered and fed the horses, we ate a little and drank water, we even slept for a few minutes. Then we went on. I cannot well remember that last march. It was a dream of moonlight sand, and black bushes, and phantom horses and men.

At three in the morning of the next day we had settled down for the "night" at Oghratina. And then came the order to be on parade again at 6.30 a.m., ready to march back to attack Bir el Abd once more.

We were on parade, ready to march, at 6.30 a.m. But we did not go to attack Bir el Abd. Other plans were made, and we merely marched round the corner to some wells, and stayed there for the day. That day and the next we remained there, while we were gathering force for our attack.

That attack never was made, for on the night before we were to move forward the Turk went. He had been bent on retreat all the time; he merely wished to hold us up. Owing to his own strength, and owing to the necessarily limited forces we had at our disposal, he succeeded in doing this. Then he went.

And so it happened that on that August morning, when we were girding ourselves for battle, we heard that our patrols were through Bir el Abd, were almost at Salmana.

The Turk was gone. And since we had chased him away to a great expanse of waterless desert, it was enough. To go farther would have been bad policy. We had sent him home discomfited; we had taken many prisoners and much spoil; we had done our job. Therefore, leaving troops to hold the line at Bir el Abd, we went home to camp.

Camp! Romani! A bath! A tent! Water to wash in! Cooked meals! It was all splendid luxury after those days of bivouacking and bully beef.

We still enjoy those luxuries.

But since the battle the flies have been horrible. We try not to think about them. . . .

And the Turk has left us more than camels, and rifles, and ammunition, and pouches, and belts.

Cholera!

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### VISIONARY

*"War is international rowdyism."*

*"In a rowdy town wise men look to their arms: in a well-ordered town they can go unarmed. It is better to stop rowdyism than to shoot well."*

*"In a civilized land it is better to have a good conscience than a good gun. In a barbarian land it is not much good having anything without a good gun."*

*"War is barbarism. Peace is civilization."*

*"When individuals became civilized, they ceased to appeal to force, and appealed to law. When nations become civilized, they will do likewise."*

*"Behind the law must be force. Where would laws be without the police?"*

*"War means decision by individual and capricious force. Peace means decision by co-operative and lawful force."*

*"When the world is civilized there will be no war. There will be the law supported by the police."*





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